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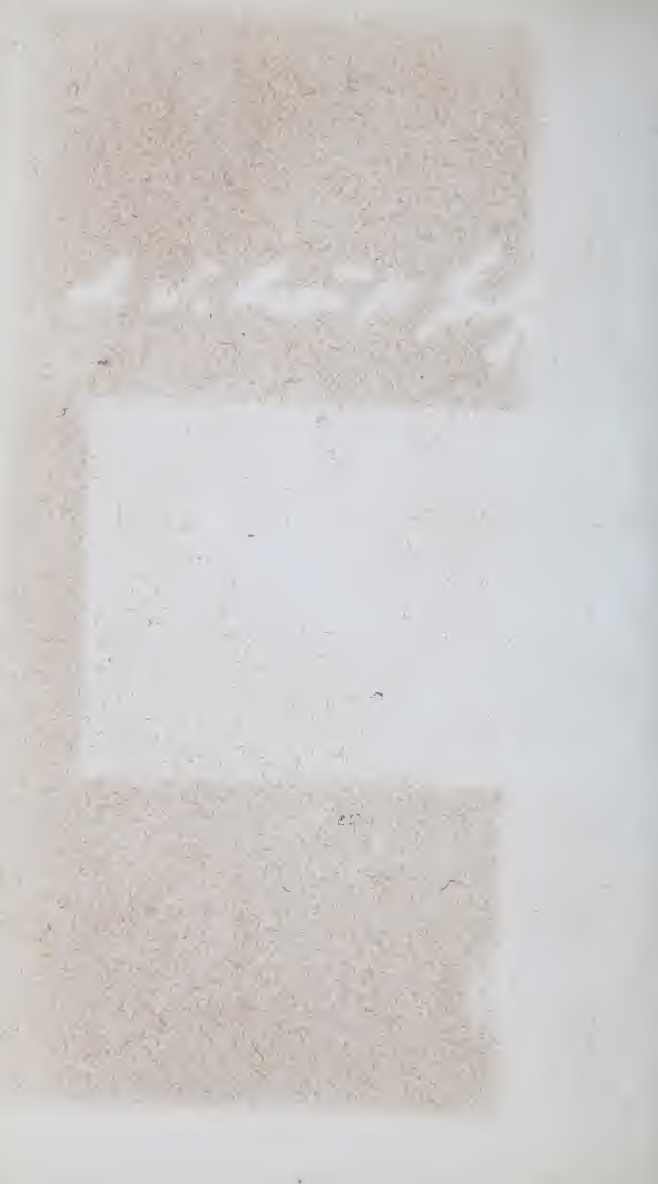
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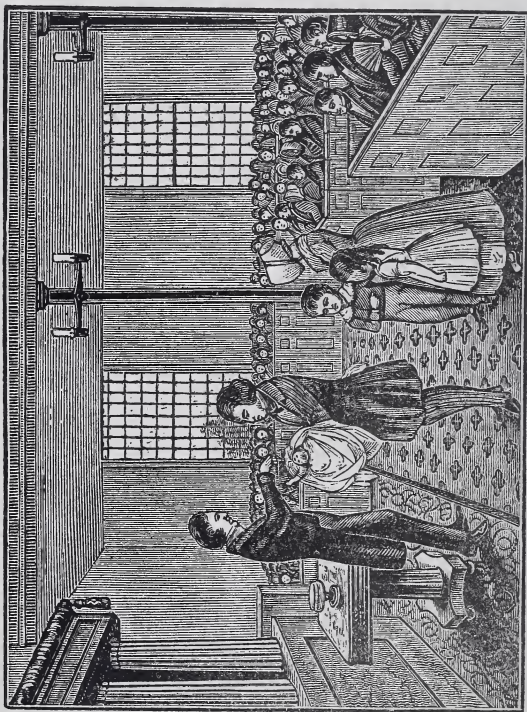












Household Baptism.

RELIGIOUS EXERCISES

FOR

CHRISTIAN FAMILIES

ON

# HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM.

Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and revised  
by the Committee of Publication.



BOSTON:

MASSACHUSETTS SABBATH SCHOOL SOCIETY,  
Depository, No. 13 Cornhill..

1843.

*Deposited June 30<sup>th</sup> 1843*  
*Recorded Vol. 18. P. 197*

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## PREFACE.

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THESE pages are designed for the use of families. The writer has, for years, desired that Christian families might have a correct knowledge of the meaning of infant baptism, the duties implied in it, and some of the principal reasons for practicing it. He believes, that if this subject were better understood, it would serve to promote the great work of training up children for the Lord. With this desire and belief, he has prepared this little volume, and now sends it out into the world, praying that it may do good.

He wishes that all Christian parents, who approve of household baptism, would read these pages with care and attention, and teach them to their children.

To aid them in this work, he has inserted at the close, a number of questions. He thinks it would be an interesting exercise, if the children in a family should be required to read, or *study*, a few pages in this book every day, and then answer such questions as their parents might ask them, on what they had read.

In this way parents and churches may be roused to their duty to baptized children; and children may have all that is important in the sacred ordinance of infant baptism, impressed upon their minds, and imprinted in their memories.



That this little volume may serve to render parents and churches more holy and faithful, and lead many of the rising generation to embrace the Saviour, is the prayer of

THE AUTHOR.



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# HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM.



## CHAPTER I.

Preliminary remarks. Meaning and mode of baptism.  
Reasons for sprinkling. What is pledged by household baptism. Of what it is a token, &c.

MR. N. was a descendant of the Puritans. It was his practice, at the close of each Lord's day, to converse with his sons, Charles and Edward, on the exercises of the day.

This practice had been attended with a divine blessing to them all, and the sons were about to enter upon the active scenes of life, enlightened and established Christians. Having witnessed, on a certain occasion, the baptism of a number of children, they at various times, held the following

conversations, on the subject of household baptism.

Charles begun, by asking this question,

Will you tell me, father, to whom children are dedicated, when they are baptized?

*Mr. N.* To the Lord.

*C.* Whose act is it?

*Mr. N.* It is the act of the Parents.

*C.* What do the parents mean to declare by this act?

*Mr. N.* They mean to declare, (1,) their belief *that their children need the influences of the Holy Spirit to purify their hearts, and inspire them with faith in Christ; and (2,) that they do publicly give their children to the Lord.*

*C.* Why is water used on such occasions?

*Mr. N.* Because water is commonly used in washing or purifying any object; and in applying it to children, when they are baptized, it is designed to direct the minds of all concerned, to those influences of the Holy Spirit, which purify the heart. Hence



we read of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. John, speaking of Christ, says, "the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

*C.* Do parents realize all this when they consecrate their children to God in baptism?

*Mr. N.* It is to be feared that many do not; yet they should realize it, not only at the time, but afterwards. They should at all times enter *fully* into the sentiment of the Apostle—"else were your children unclean, but now are they holy," i. e. *consecrated to God*. They should thus learn to feel habitually that their children are strictly and truly the Lord's; that "holiness to the Lord" is written upon them; and that their duty as parents is simply and sacredly to train them up for God.

*Edward.* When children or adults are baptized, must the water be *sprinkled* upon them?

*Mr. N.* It may be sprinkled or poured upon them, or they may be immersed in it.

*Ed.* Will the word rendered Baptize admit of all these modes of baptism?

*Mr. N.* It will.. Baptize means *to wash*, or *to wet*, and a person may be washed, or wet, by pouring or sprinkling water upon him, or by immersing him in it.

*Ed.* Have all these modes been practiced in Christian Churches?

*Mr. N.* History shows clearly that they have.

*Ed.* Why do you suppose, that these various modes have been practiced?

*Mr. N.* Because the Bible no where tells us, that there is only *one mode* of baptism.

*Ed.* Does not the Bible say, "one Lord, one faith, *one baptism?*" Eph. 4: 5.

*Mr. N.* Yes. But the Apostle here refers not to water baptism, but to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He refers to the purifying of the heart by the spirit, and not to the mode in which water must be applied in the mere external rite of water baptism.

*Ed.* What makes you think that the Apostle here refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

*Mr. N.* Because he is urging Christians to live in harmony, “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.” Since they had been baptized by the same spirit; since they had, as one body, been quickened, purified and guided by the influences of the Holy Spirit, it became them to feel that they were one in spirit and love.

*Ed.* Would it not as well accord with the Apostle’s design, to suppose that he meant to say, *one mode* of water baptism?

*Mr. N.* Try the experiment and see; suppose the Apostle to say, you have all been baptized by water in one way, therefore keep the unity of the spirit; or suppose he should say, your hearts have all been quickened and purified by the Holy Ghost, therefore keep the unity of the spirit; which would be the most forcible?

*Ed.* The last, to be sure, for the fact that the Holy Spirit had renewed and purified and quickened them, would be much more likely to make them one in spirit and sentiment, than would the mere fact that

they all had been baptized by the same mode of water baptism.

*Mr. N.* So I think. Water baptism alone would not serve to make their tempers and spirits alike; but the baptism of the Holy Spirit would do it.

*Ed.* Is baptism by water intended to point to this *one* baptism of the spirit?

*Mr. N.* Yes.

*Ed.* Do the three modes which you have mentioned, all point to this one spiritual baptism?

*Mr. N.* They do; they are three ways of representing the same thing.

*Ed.* Why then does our church generally baptize by sprinkling, rather than by either of the other modes?

*Mr. N.* There are many reasons for it. One is, it is more simple and convenient. Prayer is a religious duty, but there is a variety of ways in which it is performed. One stands, another kneels, another prostrates himself at full length on the ground, one uses a prayer book, another never uses

it, and another still sometimes uses it, and sometimes does not. But we feel that if we have the spirit of prayer, the posture we are in, when we pray is of but little consequence. Again the observance of the Lord's supper is a religious duty, but how various the mode of its observance! Some partake of the supper *kneeling*; others sitting around tables prepared for the purpose; others, sitting in their pews, while the bread and wine are handed to them by the deacons of the church.

Our Saviour and his disciples partook of the supper, in an upper chamber, and reclining upon the elbow on couches. We partake of it in that mode which is most convenient, believing that if we do it with a right state of mind and heart, we comply with the Saviour's command.

So of baptism; we think if when we administer it, we enter into the design and spirit of the ordinance, the particular external mode of observing it is not of so much importance, since the Bible has

nowhere specified the precise mode of applying the water.

It is with much force therefore that a certain writer, on this subject, asks, "why then attach so much importance to the *mere mode* of baptism? If my brother catches the *spirit* of this ordinance, shall I dispute with him about the mode? No; he has the wheat, and the chaff may go to the winds."

*Ed.* I like this view of the subject very much. It seems to give just that importance to the mere externals of religion which belongs to them.

*Mr. N.* Certainly. And, what is still more worthy of notice, this view of the subject, as I think, agrees perfectly with the spirit and genius of Christianity.

*Ed.* How so?

*Mr. N.* Has it never occurred to you, that the distinguishing feature of Christianity is the ENTIRE ABSENCE OF ALL CEREMONIAL RIGHTEOUSNESS, and that, *simplicity and convenience in respect to mere external rites,*

are prominent traits in the teaching of Christ?

It is thus that the gospel lays the axe at the very root of that spirit of self-righteous reliance, on the scrupulous observance of forms and ceremonies, for which the Jews were so noted, and upon which God so often frowned with the severest indignation. See Isaiah 1 : 11—15. Matt. 23 : 25.

*Ed.* I have often noticed this feature in the Christian religion, but I must confess, I never before thought of it, in application to baptism and its mode. I do not see, however, why it does not apply to these as well as to meats, and drinks, and holy-days; and I remember that the apostle expressly condemns making a great deal of such things, and says that “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,” (i. e. as I suppose, a scrupulous strictness in regard to mere externals, as if religion consisted in that,) “*but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*”



*Mr. N.* You are right, Edward. This feature of the Christian religion is as applicable to baptism as to any thing else.

*Charles.* I think so too, father; and I do not see but that a person, who makes a great deal of the mere mode of baptism, as if that made him a better christian, or more acceptable in the sight of God, revives the very spirit of Judaism. He abandons the spiritual simplicity of the gospel, and the righteousness of Christ, and goes back to the old ground of ceremonial righteousness, does he not, father?

*Mr. N.* Exactly so,—but we are wandering from the subject on which we first began to converse.

*Ed.* I know it, father; but now we are on this subject, I should be glad to have you state a few more of the reasons why our church prefer sprinkling, to any other mode of baptism.

*Mr. N.* I will do so cheerfully. I can now only *state* them. I would say, then, we prefer sprinkling;



1. Because the Bible often speaks of sprinkling. See Numbers 8: 7. Isaiah 52: 15. Ezek. 36: 25.

2. Because there are several places in the Bible which speaks of the baptism of persons, where the circumstances are altogether in favor of sprinkling. See Acts 2: 41. 9: 18. 10: 47, 48.

3. Because it is the most *decent* mode; and says the Apostle, "let *every thing* be done decently and in order."

4. Because it is the most *significant* mode. It represents the "washing of regeneration," "and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus," more perfectly than immersion.

And 5. Because sprinkling is as evidently acceptable to God as any other mode of baptism. We see no evidence to the contrary. God does not withhold his spirit, and refuse to convert our children because they are sprinkled. He does not refuse to bless the preaching and labors of our pastor, because he encourages sprinkling. So far

as I have any knowledge of my own experience, the Father has never hid his face from me; and the blessed Jesus, the Son, has never frowned upon me; and the blessed comforter, the Spirit, has never left my soul in darkness and distress, because I have been sprinkled. I have never yet seen any marks of the divine displeasure at the practice of sprinkling. Baptism, whatever mode we adopt, must be "*the answer of a good conscience toward God.*" *God does not "look on things after the outward appearance."* *His eye is on the heart.*

*Ed.* I am very glad to hear these reasons stated. They satisfy me perfectly, that sprinkling is a scriptural and valid mode of baptism.

*Mr. N.* I think they ought to satisfy every one.

*Charles.* I do not see how any one can help being satisfied by them.

*Mr. N.* Neither do I. We must however drop this topic for the present, and take up the subject on which we first began

to converse. At some future time, if our pastor should preach upon the mode of baptism, we may converse more about it.

*Ed.* I should like to do so.

*Charles.* And so should I; though really it appears to me that we should "redeem the time, more perfectly," by praying and laboring that souls might be "born of the Spirit."

*Mr. N.* True indeed, Charles. And if Christians of every name could be brought to feel as you do on the subject, it would be the introduction of a brighter day than the church has seen for centuries. In the language of another, "had the zeal and talents, so unwisely wasted in worse than useless disputes about the mode of baptism, been exerted in promoting the salvation of men, how much might have been done to repel the attacks of a common foe, to repair the waste places of Zion, and to send the blessings of the gospel as widely as the ruins of the fall have spread." Let the energies of the church on earth be once concen-

trated in the single great object of saving souls, and who can conceive the rapidity with which the kingdom of Christ would march on to universal conquest! Half a century would not pass, before the cruel reign of sin and satan would be broken, and Christ sway his sceptre of peace and righteousness over the earth. But we were about to resume the subject of household consecration, or infant baptism.

*Charles.* Will you tell us then, father, what parents promise, when they give their children to God in baptism?

*Mr. N.* They solemnly promise *that they will do what they can by prayer and instruction, and a holy life, to bring their children up for God.*

*Charles.* What is meant by bringing them up for God?

*Mr. N.* It means, *bringing them up in such a way, that they will love and serve God, or, in other words, become real Christians.*

*Charles.* Are the minister and the church in any way interested or concerned in the matter, when children are baptized?

*Mr. N.* Yes. The minister, by baptizing them, and the church, by assenting to the baptism, virtually promise, *that they will aid these parents, by their prayers, counsel, and example, in bringing their children up for God.*

*Charles.* How should Christian parents regard the baptism of their children?

*Mr. N.* They should regard it, (1,) as a token of the covenant between them and God, and (2,) as a token and pledge of all that is implied in that covenant.

*Charles.* Will you state what is implied in it?

*Mr. N.* The covenant implies, that the parents, on their part, sacredly give their children up to the Lord, and promise to bring them up for him; that the Lord, on his part, promises that he will be a covenant keeping God to them and their seed, and, if they are faithful, will secure to them

all the blessings of the covenant, and be their portion forever.

*Charles.* Should Christian parents regard the baptism of their children, as a token or pledge of any thing more than what you have now mentioned?

*Mr. N.* They should regard it as a pledge, on the part of the minister and church, that they are to aid them in doing their duty to their children, and co-operate with them by their advice, prayers, example, and efforts. And they should also regard it as a token, that their children need the influences of the Holy Spirit, to purify their hearts, and inspire them with a saving faith in Christ.

## CHAPTER II.

The Abrahamic covenant. The sign of that covenant. What was implied by that covenant. Improved by Christ. Not done away. Baptism instead of circumcision.

*Charles.* Since our last conversation, I have been thinking that there were some Christian parents, who do not approve of household, or infant baptism.

I should like, father, to hear you state some of the reasons why our church do approve of it, and think it a duty for believing parents to have their children baptized?

*Mr. N.* This is an important subject; and although time will not allow me to say all that might be said in its favor, still, I will cheerfully comply with your request. You will probably perceive that I can do little else than repeat what our pastor has stated to-day. I would say, then, we dedicate our children to God in baptism,



I. *Because it accords with the covenant, which God made with Abraham, the father of the faithful.*

*Charles.* Where is this covenant found?

*Mr. N.* In Genesis 17: 1—14. I will read it. “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, *I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and I will multiply thee exceedingly.* And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him, saying, as for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be called Abraham, for a father of many nations, have I made thee. And I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, *and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to*



*be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, and all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.*

And he that is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircum-

cised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant."

*Charles.* What parts of this covenant would you have us mark?

*Mr. N.* The following: "*Abraham was to walk before the Lord, and be perfect ;*" that is, he was to give himself up to serve the Lord faithfully; *and the Lord was to be a God unto him, and his SEED after him ;* that is, the Lord was to protect and bless him, and his seed forever. *As a token of all this, Abraham was to be circumcised, and to have every man-child circumcised that pertained to him.*

*Charles.* Did Abraham comply with the directions in this covenant?

*Mr. N.* We learn from the closing part of this chapter, that he did.

*Charles.* But was not circumcision something more than a mere seal or token of the covenant?

*Mr. N.* It was. The word of God teaches us, that it was to be considered as a token of the purification of the heart. "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart." Deut. 10: 16. "Neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter." Rom. 2: 28, 29. "Abraham received circumcision, as a seal of the righteousness of faith." Rom. 4: 11.

*Charles.* What is the meaning of these passages?

*Mr. N.* Their plain meaning is this, circumcision is an external mark, which represents an internal purification of the heart, and saving faith.

*Charles.* To what else did this seal of the covenant point?

*Mr. N.* It pointed to all the blessings, included in the promise; "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee."

*Charles.* What were some of these blessings?

*Mr. N.* They were various temporal blessings, such as the promised land, and daily protection; and also, spiritual blessings, such as the purification of the heart, and saving faith.

*Charles.* When Abraham *received* circumcision, how was he to regard it?

*Mr. N.* He was to regard it, *as a token of the covenant between him and God, and as a seal of his faith in God.* That he was to regard it as a token of the covenant is evident from the closing part of the covenant itself; and that he was to regard it as a seal of his faith in God, is plainly taught in Romans 4: 11. "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised."

*Charles.* When he applied this token of the covenant to his household, how was he to regard it?

*Mr. N.* He was to regard it as a token of God's covenant with them; as a token, that they needed the same faith which he had; and as a token, that he was pledged to command his household to keep the way of the Lord, and that the Lord had promised to be a God not only to him, but to his seed after him.

*Charles.* I wish you would repeat the prominent points in this covenant, so that we can remember them.

*Mr. N.* I will; for I wish you to remember them.

(1,) Abraham gave himself up to God, and promised to serve him; and God promised to *protect and bless Abraham, and his seed after him.*

(2,) As a seal of this promise or covenant, *Abraham was circumcised.* (3,) This circumcision was also *a seal of Abraham's faith and purification of heart.* As Abraham's seed were included in the promise or covenant, (4,) *he was commanded to apply the same seal of the covenant to his seed,*

i. e. to the males in his household. (5,) This implied *that they were included in the covenant, and needed the same faith, and purification of heart which Abraham possessed*; and (6,) *that he was solemnly pledged to bring them up for God.*

*Charles.* But how does the *baptism* of households accord with this covenant, which God made with Abraham?

*Mr. N.* (1,) Believing parents give themselves up to God, and promise to serve him; and God promises to be their God, and the God of their children. (2,) Their baptism is a seal of this promise or covenant. (3,) It is a token of their faith and purification of heart. As their seed or children are included in this same promise or covenant, they of course, (4,) apply the same seal of the covenant to them. Thus applied, it signifies (5,) that they need the same faith and purification of heart which the parents hope they have; and (6,) that the parents are solemnly pledged to bring them up for God.

*Charles.* How *exactly* baptism takes the place of circumcision! I wonder that any one should ever doubt this.

*Mr. N.* Surely it is wonderful; for as baptism, when considered as a sign and seal, signifies the same things as circumcision, we should naturally suppose that all would easily see that the latter takes the place of the former.

*Edward.* But do not some suppose that this covenant called the Abrahamic covenant, is done away?

*Mr. N.* Yes, and this leads me to say, that we dedicate our children to God in baptism.

II. *Because this covenant made with Abraham, never has been abrogated.* From the very words of the covenant, it appears that Abraham and his seed after him, were to observe it "*in their generations for an everlasting covenant.*" And what can the word everlasting mean, in this place, but a period as long as the seed of Abraham shall exist on the earth?



*Charles.* Will not the seed of Abraham exist till the end of the world?

*Mr. N.* Yes.

*Charles.* How, then can any one suppose that this everlasting covenant is done away?

*Mr. N.* There is no good reason for such a supposition. The natural, and the true spiritual seed of Abraham, all professedly observed this covenant, and regarded it as binding upon them, and as being everlasting. They professedly gave themselves and their male children up to God, and applied the seal of the covenant, just as Abraham did. They continued in this practice, through the whole Jewish dispensation.

*Charles.* Did the coming of Christ affect the covenant made with Abraham?

*Mr. N.* Yes.

*Charles.* How?

*Mr. N.* Christ came not to abridge former privileges, but to increase them. He poured more light upon the way of salva-



tion. He changed the seal of the covenant from circumcision to baptism. He required the seal to be placed upon females as well as upon males; and he showed the Jews, that, as the Gentiles were to be subjects of grace, they of course were to receive the new seal of the covenant.

*Edward.* Were not females, and the Gentiles, favored as much by the Jewish dispensation, as they are by the gospel?

*Mr. N.* By no means. The Jews used to say, "blessed art thou, O Jehovah, our God, that hath not made me a heathen. Blessed art thou, that hath not made me a slave. Blessed art thou, that hath not made me a woman." This shows that they ranked the heathen, or Gentiles, and slaves, and women, together. And it appears, that the women under the Jewish dispensation, held a subordinate place in the visible church. Under the gospel dispensation, women, and the Gentiles, and the Jews, may all belong to the visible

church, and share equally in its blessings and ordinances.

*Edward.* But has not Christ taught us that the covenant made with Abraham is done away?

*Mr. N.* No. He has, it is true, *changed the token, or the seal* of that covenant, but not the *covenant* itself.

*Edward.* But do not the apostles speak of Christ as “blotting out the hand writing of ordinances that was against us?” &c. Col. 2: 14. Do they not speak of him, as “making a *new* covenant, with the house of Israel?” Heb. 8: 8.

*Mr. N.* Yes. But by looking at the context of these passages of scripture, you will see, that they refer to the covenant, and its rites and ceremonies, which God made with Israel, in the days of Moses, see Exodus 12: 43—50, and not to the covenant made with Abraham, see Genesis 17: 1—14.

*Charles.* That is just as our minister explained it to-day. But, father, what is your opinion of the new covenant spoken

of in Hebrews, 8: 8. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah."

*Mr. N.* Look at the next verse, and you will see, *that the new covenant here spoken of, was to be instead of the one made with Israel, when they were led out of the land of Egypt.* Heb. 8: 9. "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord."

*Edward.* I see that what you say is plainly taught by the next verse; but do not some of the Apostles speak of the covenant made with Abraham?

*Mr. N.* They do; but they do not say that it is done away. On the contrary, Paul says in Gal. 3: 17, "the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ," that is, *the Abrahamic covenant*, "the law," that is, *the Mosaic covenant*, "which was

430 years after, *cannot* disannul, that it should make the promise of no effect." What promise can this be, which "*cannot be disannulled*," except the promise that the "Lord would be a God to Abraham and his seed?" Hence the language of Peter, Acts 2: 39. "*The promise is to you and to your children.*" &c.

*Edward.* What does all this show?

*Mr. N.* (1,) *That the covenant made with Israel, in the days of Moses, did not in the least, affect the one made with Abraham, 430 years before;—(2,) that the one made with Moses, WAS done away, and a new one made in its stead, in the gospel dispensation;—(3,) but that the covenant made with Abraham, was not done away.* That was originally made and "*confirmed in Christ*," and of course not done away when Christ came.

*Edward.* What is meant by its being "*confirmed in Christ*?"

*Mr. N.* *That it reached down to Christ, and through the Christian dispensation,—*

*and included all the blessings of that dispensation ; that, in this way, Christ gave new assurance of the certainty, the extent and duration of the covenant.*

*Charles.* How plain it is that the Abrahamic covenant is still in full force, and binding upon all his spiritual seed.

*Mr. N.* Since it is so plain, Charles, will you now sum up the reasons why you think so ?

*Charles.* (1,) Because God expressly declared it should be an *everlasting covenant*. (2,) Because the Bible nowhere teaches that it is done away. (3,) Because the apostle expressly declares in Gal. 3: 17, that it was not disannulled. (4,) Because it was originally made and "*confirmed of God in Christ*," and was thus to reach through all the Christian dispensation, and include all its blessings. Of course it was not to be done away, but is now in full force, and will be so to the end of time.

*Mr. N.* Very well, Charles. It was not to be done away "*in Christ*," but as Paul

says, in Romans 15: 8, "Christ was a minister of the circumcision," not to do away, but "*to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.*" Indeed, if this were not so, the principle that a law once made is always binding until repealed, would hold good in this case as well as in others.

*Edward.* Really, father, I must confess, that my doubts in respect to the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant are all removed.

## CHAPTER III.

Believers in all ages the spiritual seed of Abraham. The Church of God the same in both dispensations. Illustrated, &c.

*Ed.* Since our last conversation, father, I have been anxious to inquire if there are other reasons for the dedication of children to God in baptism?

*Mr. N.* There are. We dedicate our children to God in baptism,

III. *Because we profess to belong to the true spiritual seed of Abraham.*

*Ed.* To whom do you refer, when you speak of his true spiritual seed?

*Mr. N.* To believers. God has said in his word, that "they which are of faith," that is, believers, "are the children of Abraham," that is, his seed, "and heirs according to the promise," that is, heirs of the spiritual blessings promised in the cov-



enant. Gal. 3: 7, 29. Now since we profess to have faith, we profess to belong to the true spiritual seed of Abraham; and since his seed were to observe the covenant made to him, and his seed, for an *everlasting covenant*, we believe that this covenant is binding upon us, and our seed after us. Therefore, by being baptized, we ourselves have received the new seal of this covenant, and by giving our children up to God in baptism, we apply to them the same new seal of the covenant, as the seal of rich spiritual blessings.

We dedicate our children to God in baptism,

IV. *Because the Church of Christ is the same now, that it was under the Jewish dispensation.*

*Ed.* How does it appear that the Jewish church, and the Christian church are the same?

*Mr. N.* The proof of this is very clear. The church general is made up of two parts, the church visible and the church



invisible. The invisible church, includes in it all that will ever be saved by the redemption of Christ. It includes, therefore, (1,) the saints already in glory; (2,) all real saints now living on earth; and (3,) all who are to be converted to Christ, down to the end of time. The visible church, includes all who have made a public profession of their faith in Christ, and entered into a *visible* covenant with God and each other, to attend on gospel institutions.

*Ed.* Have *we* any thing to do with the invisible church in our discussion on the subject of baptism?

*Mr. N.* No. All that we need to concern ourselves about in this discussion, is, *whether the visible church is not now, and has not always, in all its various modifications and forms, been, one and the same church.*

*Ed.* Our pastor, to-day, said it had been, and though I see no particular reason for disbelieving him, still I should like to

be a little better satisfied in respect to the matter.

*Mr. N.* I will try to satisfy you. You must fix it in your mind, then, at the *out-set*, that the CHURCH ITSELF IS ONE THING, and the particular FORM OR DISPENSATION in which it exists is ANOTHER. Thus if the visible church now on earth, were to be transferred at once to heaven, it would become the church invisible. Then the visible church would cease, and be merged in the church invisible. But mark! it would not be *another* church. It would still be the same church, only in a *different form*. It would be simply a change, from visible to invisible, and not a change of churches. Just as when a man, arrived at mature age, is the same individual that he was when an infant on his mother's lap. Or just as when a man dies; mortality puts on immortality; but this does not make him, *another* man. It is the same man existing in a *different form* or *mode*.

*Ed.* I see the distinction, and it seems to me a very natural and proper one.

*Charles.* So it seems to me. And it explains at once, how it is, that the church visible has always been one and the same.

*Mr. N.* Since you understand the explanation, please to state it to *us*.

*Charles.* I do not know that I can, but I will try. When I see you, father, in the field at work, in your *every day clothes*, i. e. in just such a dress as is convenient for working, I say *that* is father in his *working dress*. And when I see you going to church in a different suit of clothes, i. e. in a dress that you could not conveniently work in, then I say *that* is father in his Sabbath day dress. And on Monday, when I see you in the field again in your every day clothes, then I say *that* is father in his *working dress again*. And I should not think much of any body that should undertake to make me believe, that father in his working dress, and father in his different dresses, were *different fathers*.

*Ed.* But what has all this to do with what we were talking about?

*Charles.* It has this "to do with" it; the church in Abraham's time, and down to the time of Moses, was *the church in her working dress*. The special work which it had to do, was to spread abroad the knowledge and worship of the true God among *all nations*. Afterwards, in the Mo-  
saic dispensation, when the Jews were separated from other nations, as a peculiar and distinct people, and the church was confined to their nation, *that* was the church in her Sabbath dress. The special work which the church *then* had to do was, to *preserve* the knowledge and worship of the true God on earth, until the promised Saviour should come, and not to spread it abroad among all nations. This she would be most likely to do in an appropriate dress. But when Christ came, then the middle wall of partition was broken down; Jew and Gentile became one in Christ. The church received a new commission,—"*Go disciple*

*all nations."* That, Edward, is the church in her working dress again. And this dress, I think, she will keep on as long as she remains on earth; and when removed from earth, she becomes the church invisible,—THAT, I think, WILL BE THE CHURCH IN HER DRESS OF VICTORY.

*Ed.* I must confess you have made it very plain.

*Mr. N.* And somewhat interesting, too,—at least to me.

*Ed.* But this is all illustrative; is there any proof that it is correct?

*Mr. N.* There is. *The covenant on which the church was founded in the time of Abraham, is the same with that on which it was founded in the time of Christ, and since.* If you examine the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, you will there see that God, finding fault with a former covenant, i. e. [verse 9] the covenant which he made with the Jews when he took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, determines to give them *another*.

And what other? It is this—[verse 10] “I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts,” and, (the very words of the Abrahamic covenant,) “*I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*”

*Ed.* Yes, I see the church *has* the same covenant now, that it had in Abraham’s time.

*Mr. N.* Very well; if it has the same church covenant, must it not be the same church?

*Ed.* This seems very reasonable. Still there have been some changes in the church under the different dispensations, have there not?

*Mr. N.* Certainly.

*Ed.* Will you mention some of them?

*Mr. N.* Under the former dispensation, they observed the seventh day of the week as their day of rest. Under the present, the first day of the week is thus observed. Under the former dispensation, they observed the passover, which pointed them



to the blood of sprinkling, that saved them from *temporal* death, as one of their ordinances. Under the present dispensation, instead of the passover, the Lord's supper, the symbol of the broken body, and flowing blood of Christ, which alone can save believers from eternal death, is observed. Under the former dispensation, circumcision was a mode of consecration to God, as we have already seen, securing blessings, temporal and spiritual, a seal of the righteousness of faith, and a sign of the purification of the heart, was practiced. Under the present dispensation, baptism takes the place of circumcision, and is to us a mode of consecration to God, a *seal* of the righteousness of faith, and a sign of the purification of the heart.

*Charles.* It seems by this, that the ordinances in both dispensations, *point to the same important truths.*

*Mr. N.* Yes: the principal change in these ordinances is in the external mode of administering them, and not in their mean-

ing. Under the new dispensation, the emblems used to represent these truths, are happily adapted to *all people*, at *all seasons*, and in *all places*. As you just said, it is a *working dress*.

*Ed.* From what you have said, I see that the church, in both dispensations is the same;—the same, in reference to fundamental sentiments, and to the import of its ordinances. Is there not, however, still more proof of it?

*Mr. N.* There is. The Old Testament is full of promises made to the *church then existing*, and then it abounds in predictions and promises that *this very church* shall be greatly blessed and enlarged in *future ages*; of course, the church was not to be done away and a *new one* planted upon its ruins. No, the *same church* to which Abraham belonged, was to be *perpetuated*, was to be composed of many nations, and was, in the end, to fill the whole earth. It has been spreading, and is now spreading, and must go on till it spreads over the world. God



has promised it. We do not, however, rest upon our own reasoning in relation to this subject. We have direct Scripture evidence. *Paul expressly asserts, that the church is one and the same under both dispensations—the Jewish and Christian.*

*Charles.* Indeed! I was not aware of it.

*Mr. N.* It is so. You recollect that Jeremiah says, concerning the church, “the Lord called thy name a green olive tree, fair and of goodly fruit.” Paul, in Romans 11: 17, 18, 24, speaking of the admission of the Gentiles into the true church as members, says that they were “grafted” into this *same* olive tree. This is his language; “And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee,” &c. “For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted con-

trary to nature, into a good olive tree; how much more shall these [i. e. the Jews] which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"

*Charles.* What does the apostle mean by the expression, "grafted?"

*Mr. N.* He refers to the process of grafting fruit trees. This consists in taking a twig, or branch, from one tree, and inserting it into the branch, or body, of another tree.

*Charles.* I recollect, when Mr. K. grafted our trees, he cut off a branch, and then took a scion from another tree, and put it into the stump where the branch was cut off.

*Mr. N.* This is the figure which Paul uses. It is very expressive. He means by it, that the church in Abraham's day, was the tree; that the Jews, the natural branches of this tree, because they had become unfruitful, had been cut off; and that the Gentiles had been grafted into the same tree, from which the Jews had been cut off.

*Charles.* Then the old tree still remains, does it not, just like our fruit trees in the garden? Other branches have been grafted into them, but still I am sure they are the same trees that they were when I was quite young.

*Mr. N.* It is precisely so. The church in Abraham's day, was the root and body of the tree, which still remain, and we Gentiles have been grafted into this same tree, so that the church now, is the same that flourished in the time of Abraham.

*Ed.* This is very plain. I do not see how the apostle could have established this point more clearly than he has in the passages which you have quoted.

*Mr. N.* Since the church is the same now that it was in the Jewish dispensation; and since its ordinances point to the same things which were indicated, or typified, by its former ordinances; we consider it our duty to attend upon these ordinances, and especially, to apply baptism, the *present* seal of faith, to our children, as believers,

in former times, applied circumcision, the *former* seal of faith, to theirs. And why should we not? If the church is the same, and the covenant of the church the same, why should our children be forbidden the seal of the covenant any more now, than formerly?

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## CHAPTER IV.

Christ only changed the seal of the covenant,—did not forbid household baptism,—did what was equivalent to encouraging it, &c.

*Mr. N.* In resuming our conversation, I would say, that we dedicate our children to God in baptism,

*V. Because Christ, in changing the seal of the covenant, did not forbid its being applied to households, or to children.*

It is evident, that real believers applied the seal of the covenant to their households,

as God commanded Abraham, till Christ came into the world. When he came, he changed the seal; he instituted baptism, and taught his disciples, "to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

*Charles.* What is meant by *all nations*?

*Mr. N.* Jews and Gentiles.

*Charles.* Who were the disciples to whom this command was given?

*Mr. N.* They were Jews, and strongly attached to Jewish practices.

*Charles.* When a Gentile parent embraced their religion, what were the Jews accustomed to have done?

*Mr. N.* They were accustomed to have that Gentile parent, and his *household*, receive circumcision. This had been their practice for ages. This was their practice when Christ came into the world.

*Charles.* Well, father, suppose Christ had said to his disciples, "*Go teach all na-*

*tions, circumcising them;*" what do you suppose they would have done?

*Mr. N.* It is very likely, when a Gentile parent believed, they would have circumcised him and his household; just as they had been accustomed to do.

*Charles.* But what did he tell them to do?

*Mr. N.* He told them, to "go teach all nations, baptizing them." Here he publicly instituted baptism, instead of circumcision.

*Charles.* Who were these disciples to baptize?

*Mr. N.* Remember, these disciples were Jews; they had been accustomed, when a Gentile parent embraced their religion, to have him and his household circumcised; they were much attached to this custom of connecting the children of proselytes with their parents, and of affixing the seal of the covenant to them. *Indeed God had commanded them to do it.* Now, after Christ had commanded these Jews to "go, teach and baptize," suppose a Gentile parent, as



they were teaching him, should repent, and believe, and embrace their religion, what should you think they would do to him?

*Charles.* I should think they would baptize him; apply to him the new seal of the covenant.

*Mr. N.* And what should you think they would do with his children?

*Charles.* As God had long before commanded the Jews to apply the seal of the covenant to such children,—as this was a practice very dear to them,—as these disciples were Jews,—and as Christ, in changing the seal of the covenant, did not *prohibit* its being applied to the households of believers, *but left this point just as it was before*;—I should think they would do just as they had been accustomed to do, i. e. apply the new seal of the covenant to such children; in other words, baptize them.

*Mr. N.* You are right. Certainly, it would be very strange if the Jews had, of their own accord, ceased to apply the seal of the covenant to the children of prose-

lytes. Would they be likely to do such a thing, unless Christ had directed them to do it?

*Charles.* Why not?

*Mr. N.* Because this applying the seal of the covenant to the households of proselytes, had been commanded by Jehovah himself, and it was a privilege *very dear* to the Jews. Now, would they give it up of their own accord?

*Charles.* I think not.

*Mr. N.* Did Christ any where require them to cease applying the seal of the covenant to the children of believing parents?

*Charles.* He did not; or, at least, we have no account of his doing it, when he abolished circumcision, and instituted baptism in its place.

*Mr. N.* Would he not have done it then, if he had intended to forbid the application of the new seal of the covenant to the children of believing parents?

*Charles.* I should think that he would have considered it *absolutely necessary* to



say to his disciples, and to have it recorded with their commission to “teach and baptize,” *you must not baptize the children of proselytes*, if he did not mean to have them baptize households as they had been accustomed to circumcise them.

*Mr. N.* Most certainly he would. For a statute is in force until it is repealed, or until the reason of it ceases. God had long before commanded his people to apply the seal of the covenant to all the males in the households of such parents as were proselyted to the Jewish faith; they had obeyed this command; it was very dear to them;—but now, when Christ commands his disciples to go and baptize, does he forbid their baptising the children of believers? Does he tell them that the practice respecting children must be changed; that instead of being baptized, as they were formerly circumcised, they must now be shut out from the precious and sacred privilege of receiving the seal of the covenant? No, nothing like it.

*Charles.* Had he thus shut them out, could Christ be called, in this respect, the “mediator of a better covenant, established on better promises?” Heb. 8: 6. It seems to me he could not.

*Ed.* But how did Christ leave the subject of applying the new seal to the children of believers?

*Mr. N.* He is *silent* respecting it. He does not repeal the old command, or law, on this point. He left his people to treat children just as they had always done. He does not even *intimate* that the privileges of children, or that the privileges of parents respecting their children, are to be *curtailed* under the gospel. He leaves this subject, just as we should have supposed he would, if he had *intended* that the children of believing parents should continue to receive the same seal of the covenant which their parents did.

*Charles.* Since Christ has left this subject in this way, with the old statute still in force, is there any ground for saying,

“that the children of believing parents must not be baptized, BECAUSE CHRIST HAS NOWHERE COMMANDED IT?”

*Mr. N.* None at all. As the command of God was still in force there was no need of Christ’s repeating it. As well might we say, *we must not observe the first day of the week as holy time, because God has nowhere commanded it.* God had formerly commanded his people to keep the Sabbath holy, and there was no need of Christ’s repeating it.

*Charles.* Well, since the old statute, in respect to the children of believing parents, is still in force, is it not proper to say, *that such children are to be baptized, i. e. receive the new seal of the covenant,* BECAUSE CHRIST HAS NOWHERE FORBIDDEN IT?

*Mr. N.* It seems to me that this is the right ground to take, in reference to this subject. *God in former times commanded the believing parent to apply the seal of faith to his children, and Christ has never forbidden it; of course, this command of*

*God is still binding upon all believing parents.*

But I would say further, we dedicate our children to God in baptism,

VI. *Because Christ actually encouraged what was similar to it.* He knew that believers were in the habit of giving their children up to God, and of having the seal of the covenant applied to them; and when he was on the earth, he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." Mark 10: 4.

*Ed.* Did Christ baptize these children?

*Mr. N.* No.

*Ed.* What then has this to do with the baptism of children?

*Mr. N.* Very much. Just bear in mind that the *dedication* of children to God is *one* thing, and the particular *rite*, or ceremony, whether it be circumcision or baptism, by which they are dedicated is *another*. Now, the Jews were expecting a *divine* Messiah, —one who would be "*Immanuel*,"—i. e.

*God with us.* Christ was that Messiah. He had been amply proved and declared to be the Messiah. With their exalted views of what the Messiah was to be; and with all the proof which they had before them, that Christ was this glorious Messiah, what would it be natural for these believing Jewish parents to do? Plainly, just what they did do in the case before us; it would be natural for them to come to their Immanuel, and *present their children to him* as they had before *presented* them to God, *and crave his blessing on them.*

*Ed.* This, to be sure, looks very much *like* dedicating children to God in baptism; still, I think you said Christ did not baptize them.

*Mr. N.* Why should he? They, doubtless, had been circumcised before; and the seal of the covenant had not, at that time, been changed. Baptism was not substituted for circumcision, as a rite of the Christian church, until after Christ's death, when he commissioned the disciples "to

disciple and baptize all nations;" of course, Christ would not baptize before baptism was substituted as the seal of faith in the church.

*Charles.* And besides, father, as you just said, the *dedication* of children is *one* thing, and the *rite* in which they are dedicated *another*; and so long as Christ encouraged the *thing*, it does not seem to me to be very important to know whether it was done by one rite or another. The thing, viz. *the public presentation of children, for the purpose of securing the divine blessing on them*, seems to me of most consequence.

*Ed.* And did Christ here encourage the practice of presenting children to him for his blessing?

*Mr. N.* To be sure he did. When certain persons brought their little ones to him, that he might touch them and bless them, the disciples, it seems, forbade them. But Christ reproved these disciples. He said to them, "Suffer little children to come



unto me, and *forbid* them not." Observe, it would seem that these children were too small to be believers. They were so small that the parents, or friends, "*brought*" them, and Christ "*took them up, in his arms.*"

*Charles.* Do not those Christians who oppose infant baptism, act just like the disciples whom Christ reproved?

*Mr. N.* Certainly, they do.

*Charles.* Do you think if Christ were now on the earth, he would reprove them?

*Mr. N.* I am not able to answer that question.

*Charles.* Well, father, I should think he would.

*Mr. N.* Let me now point you to the reason that Christ offered, when he said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and *forbid* them not,"—mark the reason,—"*for of such is the kingdom of God.*"

*Charles.* How do you understand this declaration of Christ?

*Mr. N.* In the former dispensation chil-

dren like these belonged to the covenant; they had the mark of God upon them; they had the seal of faith applied to them; to them belonged the privileges and blessings of God's covenant; they were, in reality, a part of God's covenant people. In the new dispensation, the expression, kingdom of God, was often used to represent the church of God. Therefore, when Christ here said, "of such is the kingdom of God," I suppose that he meant to teach his disciples, *that these little children were to hold the same relation to the church of God under the Christian dispensation, as they had held to God's covenant people under the former dispensation.*

*Charles.* Do you suppose that the parents in the case before us, and the disciples of Christ, would thus understand Christ's language?

*Mr. N.* As they were the posterity of Abraham, and had always been accustomed to regard, and to speak of, their children, as belonging with themselves to God's cov-



enant people, it seems to me, that they would thus naturally and readily understand him.

*Ed.* Really, this passage, when viewed in all its bearings, seems more like encouraging the dedication of children to God in baptism than I had supposed.

*Mr. N.* Yes. These parents, or friends, wished to give their children *publicly* to Christ, that he might bless them. And Christ, by his remarks and conduct on this occasion taught this truth, *that it pleased him to have his friends dedicate their children to him in a public manner, that he might bless them, and declare that they, in a peculiar sense, belonged to his kingdom.*

*Ed.* But may not parents give their children to the Lord in their closets?

*Mr. N.* They should, and they may, daily dedicate their children to God in the closet; but that is only a *private* dedication, and, in this instance, Christ would have them do more; he would have them dedicate their children to him in a *public*

manner; *this pleases him, and if any forbid it, he is displeased, and says to them, "forbid" it not.*

Believing, therefore, that it pleases Christ to dedicate our children to him in a public manner, we bring them, and publicly dedicate them to him; and when we do it, like Abraham, and pious parents of old, we apply the new seal of the covenant to them.

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## CHAPTER V.

Nothing in the New Testament against household baptism.

Passages often referred to in this case, prove nothing against it. Some passages which favor it.

*Mr. N.* In resuming our conversation, I would say we dedicate our children to God in baptism,

VII. *Because there is nothing in the Bible against it.*

There is not, in all the Bible, a single

text which forbids it. But if it be so very erroneous, as some suppose, to baptize such children, is it not strange that the Bible nowhere utters a single word against it?

*Ed.* It is. But do not those, who oppose infant baptism, think that they find something against it in the Bible?

*Mr. N.* Yes. They think that the following passages are against it; "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," Mark 16: 6. "Repent and be baptized every one of you;" Acts 2: 38.

*Charles.* But what have these passages to do with infants?

*Mr. N.* Nothing at all. The context plainly shows that they refer to adults, or to *such as are capable of repenting, and not to little children.*

*Edward.* How does this appear?

*Mr. N.* Thus; If they refer to infants, then, as infants are not capable of repenting and believing, they are excluded from salvation; for as they cannot repent, of course they cannot be saved. Besides, it

is evident, as you will see by reading what precedes and follows these passages, that the Saviour and the Apostle, when they uttered these words, had particular reference to those who were capable of understanding what they said, and not to infants. These passages, therefore, have reference only to such as are capable of understanding and doing what is here required.

*Ed.* By what principle of interpretation, do any say these passages prove *that a person must repent, before he is baptized?*

*Mr. N.* They say, because the words *repent* and *believe*, come before the word *baptize*, therefore, *all* must repent and believe *before* they are baptized; that is, the principle of interpretation adopted, is this; *what the Bible mentions first, is always to come first.*

*Charles.* I recollect that Mr. ——— the other day, said, “that we must repent and believe, before we were baptized, because this was the *order* which Christ had instituted,” and when I asked him how he

proved it, he said, "that the *words repent and believe*, came *before* the word baptize."

Mr. N. And what did you say?

Charles. I told him that the scriptures did not generally mention things just in the order in which they were to take place. But he said, "they did." Then said I, on this principle of interpretation you will get into difficulty; and that, too, on the subject of baptism. For, said I, what are we to understand by the expression, "*born of water*," in the passage, "Except a man be *born of water*, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?" John 3:5. He said, "it doubtless referred to baptism." Then I told him, that a person must be baptized, *before he repented*, or *believed*, or was *renewed*. Said he, "how do you prove it?" Easily enough, said I. The expression, "*born of water*," refers, as you have just said, to baptism, and comes *before* the other, "*born of the Spirit*," which refers to the renewing of the heart, of course, as this comes *first*, according to your own princi-

ple of interpretation, *a man must be baptized before he is renewed.*

*Edward.* What did Mr. ——— say then?

*Charles.* He said nothing, but bit his lips and went away. As he was a going, I took the liberty to say *again*, that Christ did not mention things in the Bible, *just* in the order in which they were to take place; that when Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved;" or when his disciples said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you," they did not mean to declare which should come first, repentance or baptism. I told him that in all these cases, the object was to show what all who have the opportunity, should do in order to be saved.

*Mr. N.* You took the right method for explaining these passages, and I hope that your conversation with our neighbor will do him good.

*Ed.* Do not these passages, however, teach us that adults are to be baptized *after* they have believed?



*Mr. N.* Yes; they teach this in respect to those who have never been baptized before.

*Ed.* If a person, then, be baptized in infancy, and afterwards becomes a believer, how is it proper to call him a baptized believer?

*Mr. N.* On the principle which Charles has just stated, that the Bible does not point out which is to be done first, in all cases. If a person believe, and be baptized afterwards, or if he be baptized, "*born of water,*" and after this, be renewed, in either case, he certainly is a baptized christian.

*Ed.* Will you illustrate this?

*Mr. N.* Suppose the circumcision to be the seal of the covenant still. A person is circumcised in infancy, grows up to manhood, and then becomes a believer, must he be circumcised over again in order to be a circumcised believer?

*Ed.* I think not.

*Mr. N.* Suppose a man thinks he has become a believer in Christ, is baptized, and unites with the Church; but after a year or two, he is satisfied that he has deceived himself and the Church; he falls into sin, and is excommunicated; in process of time he is awakened, and becomes a real christian; now must he be baptized again, or is he already a baptized believer?

*Ed.* It seems to me that he is already a baptized believer, and need not be baptized again.

*Mr. N.* So I think. Take the case of the children baptized to day. Suppose that they live, grow up, and *then* repent and believe, and wish to be received into the church. The question is asked concerning each one of them, Is he a believer? And after obtaining satisfactory evidence of the fact, the question is put to each, "*are you baptized?*" And they all answer, "yes." They say, "Our parents gave us up to God in baptism, a regular minister of



Christ, applied water to us in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and since we believed, we have looked back, and by faith received what they did, as our own act, we have given ourselves up to God, acknowledged what was done for us, and assented to it, as baptism. We thus have the answer of a good conscience *toward* God, in respect to the matter, and are perfectly satisfied that we have been baptized." Now can any one show that they have not been baptized?

*Charles.* I think not.

*Mr. N.* Can any one show that they have not complied with what Christ said, when he declared, "Except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?"

*Ed.* By no means.

*Mr. N.* Can any one show that they have not complied with the directions, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved;" "Repent and be baptized every one of you."

*Charles.* Certainly not; for they have *repented* and *believed*, and *are baptized*, and what more do these passages require?

*Mr. N.* Plainly, no more: of course, there is nothing in these passages against the baptism of little children. And yet these are the *only* passages, which some persons rely upon as positive proof, that the baptism of such children is contrary to the Bible. Now as these are the proof texts which they most commonly quote, and on which they most confidently rely, it is but fair to suppose that they are the best they can find in the Bible. And since there is nothing in these against the baptism of little children, it is fair to conclude that there is nothing in the Bible against it.

*Charles.* What other reasons have you to offer in support of infant baptism?

*Mr. N.* We dedicate our children to God in baptism,

VIII. *Because there is much in the Bible directly in favor of it.* There are some

passages which seemed evidently to countenance it.

*Edward.* To what passages do you refer?

*Mr. N.* An apostle, speaking to parents about their children, says, "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. 6: 4. That is, educate them as the Lord directs,—in such a way as the Lord approves. By this passage, we feel authorized to pray for our children, to instruct them, and to do all we can for them, to induce them to become Christians; and in compliance with all this, we bring them to God, and consecrate them to him, in *baptism*, as a seal of faith, and as a public pledge that we, and the Church will do what we can to bring them up for God.

*Ed.* What other passage would you mention?

*Mr. N.* Paul says, "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." 1 Cor. 7: 14.

*Ed.* To whom does this refer?

*Mr. N.* It has particular reference to those children, where only one of the parents had become a believer; and when taken in connection with the context, it means this; the children, where only one parent is pious, are not to be excluded from God's covenant of grace;—they are to be consecrated to the Lord, and have the seal of faith applied to them; in this sense they are holy, that is *consecrated to God*. What was consecrated to him was called holy. Hence we read of “holy garments,”—“holy vessels,” &c., and the Jews, because consecrated to God as a peculiar people, were called “a holy seed.” So with the children, referred to in the passage before us, they were to be consecrated to God, where one of their parents were pious, and thus become *holy in a covenant sense*. In this way they would be not an unclean, but a “holy seed.”

*Ed.* I must confess this throws some new light on the passage. It seems to give

it some *meaning*. I was always unable to see how “unclean” could mean *illegitimate* or *unlawful*, and “holy” *legitimate* or *lawful*; as neighbor A—once told me they did. It was always a mystery to me, how a child could be an *illegitimate* child, just because his father or his mother was not a christian.

*Charles.* I think, Edward, if neighbor A— had told me that, I should have asked him whether his son George was an illegitimate son, because his mother was not pious?

*Mr. N.* You might have done so with propriety Charles. But now look at our view of this passage. Where one parent was pious, the children might be consecrated to God in baptism, then because they were thus consecrated to God, it would be proper to call them “*holy*,” just as garments or vessels consecrated to God, were called “*holy*.”

*Ed.* I must confess there is much more evidence in favor of the dedication of chil-

dren to God in baptism, than I had supposed.

*Charles.* It seems clear to me that we have a sufficient warrant for it in the Bible.

*Mr. N.* We have. Our faith in respect to this matter, does not “stand in the *wisdom of men*,” but in the word of God which abideth forever. Men think such a dedication does the children no good; but on this subject, as on some others, “God makes foolish the wisdom of this world;” yea, “the *foolishness* of God is *wiser* than men.”

## CHAPTER VI.

The Apostles baptized households on account of their parents' faith. Lydia. Jailer.

*Mr. N.* I have been wishing to state some other reasons in favor of the important subject, upon which we have been conversing. We dedicate our children to God in baptism,

*IX. Because the Apostles baptized households, where the parents or heads of families were believers.*

*Ed.* What do you mean by the word households?

*Mr. N.* I mean families, including children and servants.

*Ed.* Do the Scriptures warrant this meaning of the term.

*Mr. N.* Most certainly. For instance, it was said to Noah, "Come, thou and all thy *house*, into the ark." Joshua said, "As



for me and my *house*, we will serve the Lord." Peter said, "The promise is to you, and to your children." And again, he says, "and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall tell thee words whereby thou, and all thy *house*, shall be saved." "*House*," in these passages, means the same as household. In this way, the sacred writers, and the whole Jewish nation, used these terms, and by such usage, were accustomed to connect households, or families, with their parents or guardians. This was an established custom among the Jews. Now the Apostles were Jews, and would, of course, use these terms in the same sense, if they used them at all.

*Ed.* Suppose, then, we admit that "household," according to its true and natural meaning, includes parents, and, at least, some children or servants;—is there any instance mentioned in the Bible in which the Apostles baptized a household on account of the faith of its head.

*Mr. N.* Yes. It is said concerning Lydia,



that “the Lord opened *her* heart;” that “*she* attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”—“And when she was baptized, *and her household*, she besought us, saying, if ye have judged *me* to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there.” Acts 16: 14, 15. Observe, when the Lord had opened *her* heart,—not the hearts of all in her household,—when *she* believed,—not when all her household believed, but when *she* believed,—*she* was baptized, and her household.

*Ed.* What does this prove?

*Mr. N.* It proves, that *Lydia* had become a christian, and that this was the reason, and the *only* reason given, why *she* and *her* family were baptized.

*Ed.* But might not the family of Lydia, all have become believers, and so have been baptized on *that* account?

*Mr. N.* If they had all become believers, would not the Apostle, in giving an account of the event, have mentioned that all believed? But mark how he describes the

whole affair. He tells us as plainly as language can do it, that because *Lydia* became a believer, SHE and her FAMILY were baptized; *all* on account of *her* faith.

*Charles.* But, father, as I was conversing the other day with Mr. A. about the baptism of the household of Lydia, he said "they were all believers," "because it is recorded, that sometime after the baptism of this family, when Paul and Silas went out of prison, they entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the *brethren* they comforted them, and departed."

*Mr. N.* How did you answer him?

*Charles.* I asked him how long it had been from the time of Lydia's baptism, and that of her household, to the time when the Apostles entered her house, where they saw "the brethren" and comforted them? He turned to the Bible, and answered, "it was many days after." Then I asked him if these brethren were Lydia's household? He thought they were. How do you prove

it, said I. "I cannot prove it," he replied, but I "*guess* they were." But I *guess* they were not, was my reply, and my *guess* is as good as yours.

*Mr. N.* What did he say then?

*Charles.* He said nothing, but I assured him that from the context, it appeared these "*brethren*" were the converts, or the christians at Philippi, who came to see these Apostles after their escape from prison.

*Mr. N.* That was right, Charles. Read the whole chapter, (Acts 16,) and it will appear obvious, that after Lydia's baptism and that of her household, the Apostles labored in that place many days, then they were cast into prison; when they were released, they entered Lydia's house again, "*and when* they had seen the brethren," that is, when they had tarried in the house a sufficient time for the brethren,—the christians,—in that vicinity to assemble and gain mutual comfort, they departed. There is no reason whatever to conclude, that

these "brethren" were the members of Lydia's family. Besides this, in the whole narrative of the baptism of Lydia and her household, there is not the least evidence that any other member, except herself, believed; but on the contrary, it is evident, that *she*, and *she only* believed; and that *her* family were baptized on account of her faith, just as the Jews had been accustomed to circumcise their male children on account of their parents' faith. "It all seems to have been done in her name, and on her account. She had consecrated herself, and her household to God in baptism," and then asked the Apostles, "on the ground of their approbation of what *she* had done, to come into her house." That house after this, was a place "where the brethren," the christians of that neighborhood, "met and prayed together, and comforted one another in their trials.

*Ed.* Surely, it does appear very plain in this case, that the Apostles baptized

one household, because its parent or head became a believer. Can you mention any other instance like this?

*Mr. N.* In this same Chapter, (Acts 16 : 31,) the Apostles Paul and Silas said to the keeper of the prison, in reply to his question, "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Here they speak just as Jews had been accustomed to speak, connecting the household with him who was regarded as its head. Then they preached to him and to all in his house the word of the Lord. "And he" (the keeper) "took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." "And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."

*Ed.* Does not this teach that all in the Jailer's house believed in God?

*Mr. N.* Some have said it did, but an

examination of the original Greek plainly shows the contrary. The word rendered "believing," is in the singular number, and refers to the Jailer himself. If it had referred to his household, it would have been in the plural number. The word rendered "*rejoiced*," must also refer to the Jailer. The word rendered, "with all his house," is an adverb in the original, qualifying the word rejoiced,—it means "*domestically*," or in the midst of all his family. This then, is a literal rendering of the passage, "*He, having believed in God, rejoiced in the midst of all his household.*" From this, it seems obvious that the Jailer *only*, believed, and on this account he was baptized, and all his, straightway; that is, they, or all his, were baptized "*because* they were his," or, "*because* they belonged to a believing, covenanting head of a family.

*Ed.* I must confess, you make this passage appear plainer to me than ever it did before. Can you mention any other passage



of scripture which goes to show that the Apostles baptized households?

*Mr. N.* I now think of but one more. Paul says, "he baptized the household of Stephanus." 1 Cor. 1 : 16. He says nothing about the family of Stephanus, only that he baptized them. And he speaks of it just as the Jews were accustomed to do in the days of circumcision. In those days, if a Gentile parent embraced the Jewish religion, *he*, and *all* the males in his household were circumcised; he, on account of his own faith, and *they*, on account of their parents' faith.

*Ed.* Whether Stephanus was the only believer in his household, or not; from what you have said, it seems that when Lydia and the Jailer became believers, then, not *only they themselves*, but *all* theirs were baptized, straightway.

*Mr. N.* Yes. If the Apostles had intended to inform us, that they baptized whole households, where the *parents only*, or the heads of the family, *believed*, I see



not how they could have done it in plainer terms than they have, especially in these two instances. Now since they have *thus* given us an account of these cases, it seems evident, that they meant to teach us, *that they baptized whole households, merely on account of their parents' faith*, just as the Jews had formerly circumcised all the males in a household, in consequence of the parents' faith. Believing, therefore, that the Apostles encouraged the baptism of whole families, where the parents' or heads *only* of those families were believers, we think it our duty to follow this apostolic example.

## CHAPTER VII.

Historical evidence in favor of household baptism.

*Ed.* I wish to inquire whether there are any more reasons in favor of the dedication of children to God in baptism?

*Mr. N.* There are. Those I have now mentioned are, as you see, from the Bible. I would next appeal to *history*, and say, we dedicate our children to God in baptism,

*X. Because, Christian parents have done so ever since the days of the Apostles.*

*Charles.* Indeed! Does history teach this, father?

*Mr. N.* It does. Soon after the Apostles, there lived some very good and learned men, called the Fathers. They wrote a number of books, some of which have come down to us. In these books some things are said, which show that Christian parents have been in the practice of offering up their

children to God in baptism, from the days of the Apostles.

*Charles.* Who are some of these Fathers?

*Mr. N.* Justin Martyr is one.

*Charles.* When did he live?

*Mr. N.* He was born about *four*, and wrote about *forty years* after the apostle John.

*Charles.* Surely then he must have known what was the Apostles' practice in reference to household baptism.

*Mr. N.* It would seem that he could not have been mistaken on this subject.

*Charles.* What does he say about infant baptism?

*Mr. N.* He says, "We have not received the carnal, but the spiritual circumcision by baptism. And it is enjoined upon all persons to receive it in the same way."\*

*Charles.* What do you suppose he means by this?

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\* Wall. bap. 2. page 10.

*Mr. N.* He evidently means that baptism takes the place of circumcision, and like that ancient rite, is to be applied to infants, as well as adults.

*Charles.* Is this all that Justin says on the subject of baptism?

*Mr. N.* No. He speaks of all, who were baptized, as being proselyted to Christ; that is, their being baptized was a token that they were *considered* as proselytes to Christ; and then he speaks of many who were thus proselyted to Christ in *infancy* and *childhood*; meaning by it that many in his day, were baptized in *infancy* and *childhood*.

*Charles.* Is there any other early writer who speaks of this subject?

*Mr. N.* Yes, Irenæus. He was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John. Irenæus was born near the close of the first century.

*Charles.* What does he say about infant baptism?

*Mr. N.* He says, "Christ came to save

all persons, who by him are regenerated, or *baptized unto God; infants and little ones, and children, and youths, and older persons.*"\*

*Charles.* What does he mean by the word *regenerated*?

*Mr. N.* He uses it, (as all good judges say the other Fathers did,) for *baptized*. In this place, Irenæus expressly calls baptism, regeneration, and says, infants were regenerated; that is *baptized*.

*Charles.* When did he write this?

*Mr. N.* He was born before the death of the Apostle John, and wrote the above statement about infants being baptized, within seventy years after the apostles. Thus history assures us *that infants were baptized, within eighty years after the apostles.*

*Charles.* Yes, and as Irenæus must have known what the apostle John did, is

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\* Wall. bap. 3. page 14. Irenæus against Heresies. book 2. Chap. 39.

it not likely that he considered the apostle's practice as sanctioning infant baptism?

*Mr. N.* It would certainly be very natural to suppose that the early Christians followed the instruction and example of the Apostles, on this important subject.

*Charles.* Is there any other witness of this kind who testifies in favor of infant baptism?

*Mr. N.* Yes. Origen, who was born about eighty-five years after the death of the apostle John, says, "Infants also, by the *usage* of the church, are *baptized*."\*

*Charles.* Was Origen a person likely to know what the *usage* of the church was?

*Mr. N.* Yes; he was a learned man, and had traveled extensively. His ancestors were Christians, and lived so near the days of the apostles, that he could easily have learnt, and doubtless did learn from them, the practice of the apostles.

*Charles.* Will you tell us what he said?

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\* Wall. Chap. 5. page 27 Homily 8. on Levit. 12

*Mr. N.* About one hundred and ten years after the apostles, he declared, that “*by the USAGE of the church, infants were baptized.*”—“*That the church had from the apostles, a tradition*” or order, “*to give baptism even to infants.*”\*

*Charles.* Do you place much confidence in what Origen says upon this subject?

*Mr. N.* Yes. He states a fact in respect to the usage of the Church. He could not be mistaken as to this fact. He was a man of great learning. His ancestors had been christians for several generations; some of these ancestors had lived in the time of the apostles. He was himself probably baptized in infancy. Surely he must have known that the baptism of infants was a usage received from the apostles.

*Charles.* What does the testimony of these writers establish in reference to household baptism?

*Mr. N.* These testimonies show, that

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\* Comment on Rom. Book 5.



for one hundred and ten years after the apostles, it was not only the *usage* of the church to baptize infants, but that the church, during that time, understood that infant baptism was ordered by the apostles. Observe the church had "*this tradition from the apostles.*"

*Ed.* I recollect reading an account of a council of sixty-six bishops or ministers, who had met at Carthage, one hundred and fifty three years after the apostles, to discuss the subject of infant baptism—will you state what they did?

*Mr. N.* They discussed the question, "whether an infant might be baptized *before* it was eight days old." And they decided "that an infant might be baptized, when it was two or three days old."\*

*Charles.* Was there anything said in this council against infant baptism?

*Mr. N.* No. Fidus, who proposed this question, it is true, thought that infants

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\* Cyprina's Epis. 64. to Fidus. Wall. page 38.

ought not to be baptized *until* they were eight days old; but he and the whole council, speak *as though it were the common practice to baptize infants*. About this, there was no dispute, the only question was, “will it do to baptize them *before* they are eight days old?” And it was decided unanimously in the affirmative.

*Charles*. Could not this council have easily ascertained what was the practice on this subject in the apostle’s days?

*Mr. N*. Yes; for they met only one hundred and fifty-three years after the apostles. And here, this whole council speaks of infant baptism, as if it had been universally practiced, and says, “it may be administered *before* or *after* a child is eight days old.”

*Charles*. Surely, your proof from history thus far is very satisfactory. Can you mention any other writer who bears testimony in favor of infant baptism?

*Mr. N*. Augustine, who lived about three

hundred years after John's death, says, *that infant baptism was "not instituted by any council, but always has been in use."* He adds, *that "he had never read or heard of any Christian, Catholic, or sectary who held otherwise."*\*

*Charles.* What! Never heard of anybody who ever denied infant baptism! And that within three hundred years of the apostles too!

*Mr. N.* Even so, and what is more, he was a very learned man; was perfectly acquainted with the history of those three hundred years, and must therefore have known it, or at least "heard," if anybody had denied that infants were proper subjects of baptism.

*Charles.* This is strong testimony I think. I do not see how any one can get away from it.

*Mr. N.* True, Charles; and yet a certain Pelagius, who lived and wrote at the same

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\* Wall, page 42—174.

time, says things quite as strong. This Pelagius was a great traveler, as well as a very learned man. And besides this, he had a dispute with Augustine, in which he was charged with virtually denying infant baptism. And he thus meets this charge, "men *slander* me as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants. I never *heard* of *any*, not even the most *impious heretic*, who denied baptism to infants."\* From these witnesses, and others that might be mentioned, we are assured that Christians, during the first three hundred years after the apostles, dedicated their children to God in baptism.

*Ed.* But, father, did not a writer called Tertullian who flourished about the end of the second century, oppose infant baptism?

*Mr. N.* In some cases he opposed it, and in others he did not. He adopted the strange notion, that baptism was accompanied with the remission of all past sin, and that sins committed after baptism were peculiarly

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\* Wall. page 210.

dangerous; he therefore advised that all infants and others, who might be exposed to fall into sin, should postpone their baptism until they had escaped the danger of being led astray. But where an infant, or any other persons were liable to die, he advised that they should be baptized.

*Ed.* Did he plead scripture, or the *usage* of the Church to favor his strange notions?

*Mr. N.* No. He never maintained that infant baptism was not sanctioned by scripture, or by the usage of the church. Indeed, by advising its delay, he virtually admitted it to be the common practice. And he did not advise its delay, any more than he did the delay of the baptism of young men and women, and others who were exposed to be led into sin by temptation.

*Ed.* The testimony of Tertullian then does not weigh against infant baptism, any more than it does against the baptism of all who are liable to sin?

*Mr. N.* No. And it seems that Tertullian's influence was very limited, for it is said that his own church continued the

practice of infant baptism. Only a few individuals followed his advice, and that only a few years.

*Charles.* Can you adduce historical evidence to show that the practice of infant baptism was continued many centuries after the first four?

*Mr. N.* Yes. A writer, who had thoroughly examined this subject, says, "in the next seven hundred years, that is, the seven hundred years that followed the fourth century, "there was not a society nor an individual, who ever denied the right or the duty of infant baptism."

*Charles.* That will bring us down to the twelfth century. Who then opposed infant baptism?

*Mr. N.* In the year 1120 Peter de Brius headed a small sect among the Waldenses, who opposed infant baptism, because they suppose infants incapable of salvation.

*Charles.* Did the Waldenses generally join this sect?

*Mr. N.* No; this sect was small, and soon came to nought. But the Waldenses



as a body always practiced infant baptism. The Rev. Mr. Burt, the moderator of the synod of the Waldenses, said to Mr. Dwight of Boston, a few years ago, "*we present our children in baptism,—we bring our children to be baptized,—we have always baptized our infants, and have always baptized them by affusion.*"

*Charles.* About what time did opposition next arise against infant baptism?

*Mr. N.* In 1522, the Anabaptists arose in Germany. "They were the first body of people, in the whole christian world, who rejected the baptism of infants, on the principles now adopted by the Baptists."

Thus from history, "it appears, that household baptism was practiced by the whole church, from the first century to the sixteenth, with the exception of a few who held that infants were incapable of salvation; that each generation of Christians received this practice from its predecessor as a divine ordinance; and that the doctrine, that adult believers only are proper



subjects of baptism, is an error of very recent date."

*Charles.* How do the opposers of infant baptism get away from this historical evidence in its favor?

*Mr. N.* Some of them say that "the infants," mentioned by the early Fathers in this history, "were real believers."

*Charles.* Then these infants must have believed *before* they were eight days old! And what is more, if they were believers, and their baptism believer's baptism, and if immersion only be baptism, then they must have been *immersed*. And I think it would be rather a queer sight to see an infant, eight days old, going down into the water, and coming up out of the water with a minister. We do not have such infants now-a-days. But is this the only way in which the opposers of infant baptism evade this historical evidence in its favor.

*Mr. N.* No. In one of their books on this subject it is said that "possibly the

practice of infant baptism originated with the clergy, in ancient times.”

*Charles.* I should think that by resorting to such a course, they might disprove any historical fact. Do the opposers of infant baptism present any good proof as to the time when this practice was commenced?

*Mr. N.* They do not. Some of them say “that it was not generally practiced, till about the end of the second century.”

*Charles.* What proof do they bring to establish such an assertion. Do they show us that there was any controversy or discussion about the introduction of infant baptism before, or during the second century?

*Mr. N.* They do not. Indeed they cannot. Some of them seem only to suppose that it commenced about that time.

*Charles.* But can they tell what was practiced during the first and second centuries, as well as Justin Martyr, or Iræneus, or Origen, or the sixty-six bishops?

*Mr. N.* I think not. I should sooner believe these ancient witnesses on this point, than all the people now living.

*Charles.* So should I. And if infant baptism, as they say, was not practiced till about the end of the second century I should like to know how such a practice became general in the church, so soon, unless the apostles had approved of it?

*Mr. N.* I am glad to hear you ask that question, and in respect to it, I would say, that the first two centuries were a period when Christians were on their guard against heresy and innovations; and if infant baptism had then been introduced, as some of its opposers say it was, without the authority of the apostles, Christians would have risen against it. There would have been much written, and said, and done against such a heresy. The opposers of it, if they acted on the same principles in respect to it, as its present opposers do, would have cut off from their communion, every individual,

and every church which should adopt and practice the pernicious heresy.

No sooner could an individual have embraced and practiced the notion of infant baptism, than he would have been at once excluded from the communion. And no sooner could a particular church have adopted it, than the entire church too must have been cut off from all communion with other churches. And this, I think, would have made "no small stir." Certainly some controversies would have arisen, and some books would have been written against this innovation and heresy.

*Charles.* And is there no account of any such controversy?

*Mr. N.* None at all. Infant baptism, it is said, was introduced gradually, and did not become the general practice "till about the *end* of the second century! This is only saying in other words, that the *controversies*, on the subject, which must have existed, if it was an innovation, did not cease until the end of the second century.

And this again, is only saying, that as late as the year 200, there were *some persons*, who did deny infant baptism, and regarded it as an innovation and a heresy; and yet, Augustine, in the year 300, only 100 years after, says, "*he had never read or heard of any*" who did deny it; and Pelagius, who would have denied it if he could, says, "*I never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants.*"

*Charles.* If there had been any controversies on this subject, or any persons in the first two centuries, who refused to baptize infants, would these fathers have been likely to have known it?

*Mr. N.* They would; for they were learned men, and were well versed in the histories of those times. To sum up what I have to say, then, on this point, if infant baptism was introduced, as some of its opposers say, it would have met with strong opposition, and it could not have become a general practice in so short a time; but since we have no account of its being thus

introduced, or opposed by Christians, and since it was a general practice 150 years after the apostles, I conclude, infant baptism must have been practiced and sanctioned by the apostles themselves. I conclude, that the apostles must have authorised their disciples to practice it, and in this way it spread with the gospel, and has been spreading to the present time. And I wish to see it spread, till the church of God shall become the praise and glory of the whole earth.

*Charles.* Do you attach much importance to this historical proof in favor of infant baptism.

*Mr. N.* I do. And why should I not. Historical proof satisfies us that the Bible was written by holy men of old, and that the first day of the week was observed by Apostles and others as the Lord's day. Since we feel satisfied with this kind of proof on these and various other subjects, why should we not be satisfied with it, and especially since it speaks so plainly, in re-



ference to the practice of infant baptism? Why should this kind of evidence be rejected in reference to this one subject, and yet admitted in reference to all others of ancient date. If you reject it here, why not carry out the principle of rejecting historical proof in respect to all other ancient subjects? Take away this kind of evidence, and will you not overthrow all the ordinances of religion? Nay more, will you not sweep away Christianity itself?



## CHAPTER VIII.

Parents act for their children in many things. Did so in former times, in reference to the externals of religion. Same relation between parents and children. Same duties grow out of this relation. Good effects of household baptism, &c.

*Mr. N.* We will resume our conversation on household baptism. We dedicate our children to God in baptism,

*XI. Because, according to the Providential government of God, parents thus act for their children in other things.*

*Charles.* Do you mean by this, that God has treated children as if they were a part of the parents themselves.

*Mr. N.* I mean something like it. God has always connected little children with their parents, both in the blessings and the judgments which he has sent upon them. God saved Noah because he was a right-

eous man, and his sons and their children, because they belonged to righteous Noah. But he destroyed the wicked parents of the old world, and their children with them.

*Charles.* How was it when God made covenants with various parents in ancient times?

*Mr. N.* When he made a covenant with Adam, and Noah, and Abraham, he uniformly connected the children with the parents. Now, since God included, in his covenant with parents, their children, why should we not conclude that he meant thus to include them in the covenant of grace?

*Charles.* You say that parents, in other things, act for their children. Will you point to some instances?

*Mr. N.* They act for their children in educating, supporting and governing them. They also make contracts for them. A parent binds his child to another person, to learn some trade. A parent gives a deed, and

binds himself and his children, or heirs, to perform certain promises.

*Ed.* Are these bonds, or deeds, binding upon the children?

*Mr. N.* They are; common sense, and civil law, regard such deeds, or bonds, as binding.

*Ed.* What inference do you draw from this established principle, of parents acting for their children in all worldly affairs, till they come to an age to act for themselves?

*Mr. N.* Since parents act thus for their children in other things, why should they not in religious or moral things, so far as externals are concerned? That is, why should not the believing parent, in covenant, give his children up to God, and apply to them the seal of the covenant?

*Ed.* Did God command parents to do this in former times?

*Mr. N.* Yes; and so far as we can see, he did it on account of the relations which exist between parents and their children. This command seems to be founded on the

fact, that God has so constituted parents and their children, that the parent is bound to act, and must, *necessarily*, in many things, act for his child.

*Ed.* Does the same relation now exist between parents and their children, which formerly existed?

*Mr. N.* We must conclude it does, since there is no account of any change.

*Charles.* Surely then, it must be, that believing parents are to give their children to God in covenant, and apply to them the new seal of the covenant.

*Mr. N.* I suppose, then, that you would unite with me in saying, let parents give their children to God in baptism; and in training them up, persuade them to accept of, and ratify, what they have done for them.

*Charles.* Certainly, I think it is every Christian parent's duty; a duty which he owes to himself, to his children, and to his God.

*Mr. N.* You are right. Let parents *thus*

“train up their children, in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not depart from it.”

But again, we dedicate our children to God in baptism,

*XII. Because it tends to make parents more faithful to them, and to excite in the surrounding community, a deeper interest in the spiritual welfare of the rising generation.*

*Ed.* How does it tend to make parents more faithful to their children?

*Mr. N.* They are under strong obligations to bring their children up for God; and when they give them up to him in baptism, they solemnly and plainly *pledge* themselves to do this. And will not a man be more likely to do his duty, when he has solemnly and publicly pledged himself to do it, than he will when he has not bound himself by any such pledge? Common sense and every man's experience assure us that he will.

*Charles.* Will you state some of the

circumstances in which this pledge is made on the part of the parent?

*Mr. N.* He stands up before God, angels, and a multitude of witnesses; he stands up in a spirit of prayer, and with a sense of his dependence on God, gives his offspring up to the Lord, and *pledges* himself to God and the church, that he will “faithfully *guide, restrain, and educate, intellectually and morally, that immortal spirit for heaven.*”

*Ed.* Is there any thing besides this pledge of the parents, in the ordinance of infant baptism, that serves to make them more faithful to their children?

*Mr. N.* The minister and the church are also solemnly pledged to aid the parents in doing their duty, and to see that they strive to fulfil their covenant vows to their little ones. And in such circumstances, where parents, and ministers, and churches, are all thus pledged to each other, and to God, to do what they can to train up their children for God, who does



not see that parents will be more likely to be faithful in their duties to their children, than they would if all these public pledges and incentives were removed?

*Charles.* For my part, I cannot conceive how any one can help seeing it. Our fathers, when they signed the Declaration of Independence, pledged themselves and their all to the cause of liberty. Who does not see that their solemn pledge must have exerted a mighty influence upon them? If Edward and I, and all the other young people in this neighborhood, with our parents, should pledge ourselves to each other, that we never would drink ardent spirit, I think that very pledge would put us on our guard, and we should, therefore, be more likely to grow up temperate men, than we should without it.

*Ed.* But you said, father, that infant baptism had a tendency to excite, in the surrounding community, a deeper interest in the spiritual welfare of the rising gene-



ration. Will you show us how it does this?

*Mr. N.* Did you never hear the wicked express their surprise, when those youth who were baptized in infancy, attended parties of amusement and pleasure?

*Ed.* Yes. I recollect that I attended such a party once, before I indulged a hope; and afterwards I understood that several wicked persons said, "they wondered that I, who had once been given to God in baptism, should be allowed to go into such company."

*Mr. N.* In this, you may see that your having been given up to God in baptism, made an impression on the minds of the wicked, that *you* were to be brought up for God.

*Ed.* Do you think that such an impression is common among those who are not Christians?

*Mr. N.* It may not be so general as it would be if Christian parents were more faithful; but even now, many people of the

world expect that such children as have been dedicated to God in baptism, will not be allowed to mingle in parties of pleasure, and in the sins of this world, as others do, who have never been thus given to the Lord.

*Ed.* Do you think that infant baptism produces this impression in their minds?

*Mr. N.* It evidently does, to some degree.

*Charles.* But is this all that infant baptism does towards exciting the surrounding community to a deeper interest in the spiritual welfare of the rising generation?

*Mr. N.* No. Infant baptism, as practiced by various denominations, serves to *stimulate* the Baptists to good works, in behalf of the rising generation.

*Charles.* That is just what I was thinking of.

*Mr. N.* The Baptists, you know, oppose infant baptism. Yet when some of their most able writers urge their denomination to strive to bring up their children

for God, they sometimes reason thus:—let us be faithful in bringing up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and thus show others that we can do our duty, even without pledging ourselves to do it, by giving up our children to God in baptism. Now, what is this but just saying, other denominations have their children baptized, and this excites them to strive to train them up for heaven; but let us see if we cannot excel these denominations in bringing up our children for heaven, without having them baptized.

*Ed.* Can you point us to any of their books, or pamphlets, where the Baptists reason in this way?

*Mr. N.* Yes. Here is a printed circular, on the duty of training up children for heaven, written by Prof. Chase, of the Newton Baptist Theological Institution.

*Ed.* For what did the Professor prepare this circular?

*Mr. N.* He prepared it to be read before

the Boston Baptist Association, which met at Roxbury, Sept. 21, 1831.

Turn to the 21st page of the printed minutes, and you will find the following remarkable passage. "*Let us convince our erring brethren of other denominations, that his [Christ's] disciples can feel the force of the divine command, 'Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' without performing a ceremony that HAS NOT been commanded.*"

*Ed.* What was the writer's object in this sentence?

*Mr. N.* He was presenting motives to induce parents and others, of his denomination, to make strenuous efforts to train up their children for God. And to excite them to this great work, he points them to others and does the same as to say, See other denominations; they have their children baptized; by this, and other things, they are trying to train up their little ones for the Lord. But let us be more faithful to ours, than they are to theirs, and that, too, with-

out having ours baptized; and thus let us convince our brethren of other denominations of their error. Thus he takes what we do, and presents it to his brethren, to urge them to greater faithfulness in their duties to their children; he takes our course, and urges it upon his brethren, as a motive to excite them to a deeper interest in the spiritual welfare of the rising generation.

*Ed.* Do you mean that he urges them to imitate us?

*Mr. N.* Not exactly that: he urges them to be more faithful than we are, that they may thus show us and the world, that parents can be faithful to their children without having them baptized. We have ours baptized, and this excites us to faithfulness in doing our duty to them; he thinks *this* is an error, and now he takes what he calls our erroneous practice, and holds it up before his friends, to *provoke* them to a greater interest in the spiritual welfare of the rising generation.

*Ed.* You think, then, that our practice of infant baptism, tends to urge the opposers of it to greater zeal and faithfulness in training up their children for God?

*Mr. N.* I have no doubt of it: and the judgment day alone can reveal the amount of good that infant baptism and its consequences have done, by exciting the Baptists to gather their children into Sabbath schools, to form maternal associations, to prepare memoirs of pious children for them, and thus, in various ways, to strive to bring them up for Christ and heaven.

*Charles.* What do you mean by the consequences of infant baptism?

*Mr. N.* I mean every thing which it excites Christian parents and churches to do, to secure the salvation of their children.

*Charles.* What are some of the things which it excites them to do?

*Mr. N.* Before I answer that question, let me say, that infant baptism often has a powerful effect upon the child, when he

has arrived to mature years. An intelligent young man, who was not a professor of religion, once said, "I should infer from my own experience, that the ordinance of infant baptism was a powerful check to restrain a person from evil, for the thought that I have thus been consecrated to God, has powerfully restrained me amid temptations, and preserved me from vice and immorality." I could adduce other testimony like this, but I forbear.

*Charles.* Will you now answer my last question?

*Mr. N.* Infant baptism excites parents to instruct their children. It moves the father to this work "when he sitteth down, and when he riseth up, when he goeth out, and when he cometh in, in the house, and by the way; and it moves the mother to it, in the closet and in the nursery. It excites them to pray for the conversion of their children, and especially, to plead with God to bestow on them his covenant blessings.

*Charles.* Does it tend to encourage



Christians and ministers to pray for these children?

*Mr. N.* It does. At a meeting where prayer was offered for the conversion of a certain lawyer, as they were about closing, it was said, "he is a baptized child;" this led them to renew their prayers, in which the covenant promises were plead before God, and plead in earnest, and from that very hour that lawyer became a hopeful follower of Christ.

I recollect many instances similar to this.

*Charles.* What else does infant baptism excite parents and Christians to do?

*Mr. N.* It tends to hold up constantly to their view, the condition of these baptized children, and the way in which they are to be saved, and thus urges the parents and churches to be active in devising and using means adapted to secure their salvation.

*Charles.* What means has it served to excite them to use, to obtain this desired object?

*Mr. N.* It has done much towards exciting them to establish Sabbath and infant schools, and maternal associations, and to prepare books, adapted to allure children and youth into the paths of virtue and religion.

*Charles.* How much do you think has been done in this way, to secure the salvation of the rising generation?

*Mr. N.* No mortal can tell. But I repeat it, the judgment day will show how much infant baptism has done, to secure the salvation of *baptized children*; and even the children of the Baptists who reject it.

## CHAPTER IX.

God approves of household baptism in the dispensations of his grace. In revivals. Facts. Not expect all this, if household baptism is a heresy.

*Charles.* Have you any more reasons to offer in favor of household baptism?

*Mr. N.* Yes. We dedicate our children to God in baptism,

XIII. *Because God, in the dispensations of his grace, shows that he approves of it.*

Under the Jewish dispensation, God frequently blessed children or families for their parents' sake, that is, on account of the parents' piety and faithfulness. For instance, he blessed and preserved Noah's family, and some of Lot's, for their fathers' sake, and he, doubtless, acts on the same principle still.

*Ed.* Do you suppose, then, that God re-

gards with favor, those children who have received the seal of the covenant through the medium of their parents?

*Mr. N.* I do; and soon I will give my reasons for it. Before I do so, however, let me ask, if household baptism be "*an error*," or "*a pernicious heresy*," as some have called it, what should we expect that God would do to those individuals, or churches, who practice it?

*Charles.* Why, that he would, in some way, set the seal of his disapprobation upon it. In other cases, where individuals, or churches, have turned aside to heresy, God has generally withheld his spiritual blessings from them, and why should he not in this?

*Ed.* How is it in respect to those who practice household baptism?

*Mr. N.* Have you never noticed any facts in reference to this question, which go to prove that God blesses the administration of this ordinance to the spectators?

*Charles.* I have, father. When child-

ren have been baptized, I have often noticed how many of the little boys and girls would get into the front seats, in the gallery, and there gaze at the scene before them; and to-day, I saw many of them shedding tears while the minister was baptizing Mr. B's little children. I recollect that seeing the baptism of children, always made me feel serious; and do you not remember how Edward and I used to ask you serious questions, after we had returned from meetings where children had been baptized? You know when I was about thirteen years old, that seeing the baptism of several little children, deeply and seriously impressed my mind; and these impressions, I hope, have resulted in my conversion.

*Mr. N.* I know that the baptism of children has often been thus blessed to the spiritual welfare of spectators. But this is not the only way in which God has marked it with his approbation.

*Ed.* In what other way has God done this ?

*Mr. N.* There is much reason to believe that it has been a blessing to the baptized children themselves. Indeed, it may be seen, I think, that God pays some respect to it, in the *dispensations of his grace*.

*Ed.* Can you mention any facts which show this ?

*Mr. N.* Facts of this kind are frequently found in revivals of religion.

*Ed.* Will you state some of them ?

*Mr. N.* In one town “where the number of individuals who were baptized in infancy, constituted but a small proportion of the whole population, seventy-nine were added to the church during the year 1812, and all but four of them were from the class of baptized children.” “In another town where about one hundred were added to the church, in 1810—11, all but twelve of them were baptized in their infancy.” “In another town, during the year 1815, thirty-one were received into the church at

one time, and twenty-one of these were baptized in their infancy. A young man, educated a Baptist, was a spectator of this interesting scene. He was filled with wonder and disappointment, that ten only of this number were then baptized. As he returned from meeting, he asked an aged professor of religion, 'if this were not an uncommon case, that so great a proportion of the converts were baptized in infancy?' The professor answered, 'No, it is very common for by far the largest proportion of converts, in revivals, to be those who were dedicated to God in infant baptism.' The young man replied, with much feeling, 'if it be so, then surely, *God has respect to his everlasting covenant.*' Since that time, this young man has become hopefully pious, and for years, has been an active member of that very church, where he witnessed the above mentioned scene."

*Ed.* But do these facts prove that God blesses infant baptism?

*Mr. N.* If these were the only facts of



the kind that could be mentioned, it would not be proper to consider them as *decisive* evidence in the case. But since facts similar to these are common in our country, I think they plainly declare, that God, in the dispensation of his grace, has respect to the everlasting covenant, and approves of having its seal applied to the children of believers.

*Ed.* But do not those children who are baptized in infancy, enjoy better instruction than others? And are they not blessed in these revivals, on account of this religious instruction, rather than on account of their baptism?

*Mr. N.* Without doubt they have better instruction than others, but why do they have it? Plainly and chiefly because they have been consecrated to God in baptism. This has placed their parents where they stand pledged to God, and the church, to be faithful in educating their children for God. *This doubtless excites* their parents to be more faithful, than they otherwise

would be, in teaching, and training up their offspring for heaven, and in this way, God blesses their baptism, and causes it to promote their salvation.

*Ed.* Is there any other way, in which you can show that God, in the dispensations of his grace, sets his mark of approbation on household baptism?

*Mr. N.* Yes. By going over the land, and instituting a comparison between the number of converted children, in the Congregational and Baptist denominations.

*Ed.* And how would you make such a comparison?

*Mr. N.* I would take from each of the two denominations an equal number of families, in which the parents were pious, then institute a comparison between the number of converted children in those several families, and ascertain if there were not as many among the Congregationalists, as there were among the Baptists. Rather, I would ascertain, if there were not *more* among the *former* than the *latter*.

*Ed.* But there might be many more children in one denomination than in the other.

*Mr. N.* I would make due allowance for this, and every other circumstance, and then see, in which denomination there were the greatest number of professedly pious children.

*Charles.* I have just been making such a comparison. I have taken the town of N. where there has been a Congregational and a Baptist church, for more than forty years; and where for twelve or fourteen years past, both churches have mutually shared in several revivals of religion.

*Ed.* Have you selected the families so as to be impartial in your comparison?

*Charles.* Yes, I have taken all the families, with whom I am acquainted, from the Baptist church, where there are children, and where the heads of the family are hopefully pious. And about all of the same description, from the Congregational church.

*Mr. N.* Well, what is the result of your comparison?

*Charles.* I know eighteen families in that place, in each denomination, where the parents or heads of each family are all professors of religion, and have been such for years. In order to obviate objections, I have included in my comparison, no children in either denomination, but such as are more than six years old.

*Ed.* Well, what is the result?

*Charles.* In the eighteen Baptist families, I find that *one half* of their children *wanting one*, are professedly pious. In the eighteen Congregational families, I find that *three fourths* of their children are professedly pious.

*Ed.* You surprise me; I never once thought that the result could be so much in favor of our denomination.

*Mr. N.* And yet, Edward, go through the land, and make such a comparison as Charles has now made, and see, if you do not thus find abundant reason to say, surely

God has respect to his everlasting covenant, and to the children of the covenant who are marked for him. Now if infant baptism be a "*pernicious heresy*," we should certainly expect to find the children of pious *Baptist* parents much more frequently converted, than those of Congregational parents. But instead of this, we find the reverse is true. I repeat it, then, carry out the comparison, carry it through all the evangelical societies of our country, and see, if you do not find enough to convince you that God *publicly* fixes the mark of his approbation, on those who practice household baptism, by converting multitudes of these baptized children, that, if Christian parents and churches who practice infant baptism, would only perform the duties involved in this sacred ordinance more faithfully, a still larger proportion of their children would be singled out as subjects of divine grace; and that God does indeed fulfil his promise, to be a God to such

as dedicate their offspring, as well as themselves to him!

*Charles.* I think I should be convinced, father. I have thought of these things before. And there is *one other* thing that I have thought of, which I think the Baptists would find some difficulty in explaining.

*Mr. N.* What is it?

*Charles.* It is this; if infant baptism be a "*pernicious heresy*"—if it be a "*profanation*" of a sacred ordinance,—if it be the result of pride, or an unwillingness to "*take up the cross*," and if men practice it because they are ashamed of Christ, and are disposed to obey men rather than God, then, why, I ask, does not God frown on such parents, and their children too? Do you think God can countenance a "*pernicious heresy*" and a "*profanation*" of holy things, and this too, when it is all the fruit of mere pride, or something as bad? But does he not countenance it when he converts three fourths of our children, and only about one half of the Baptists? Why, I should think,

if household baptism were such a wicked, and "*pernicious heresy*," that God would frown upon it, and upon all that practiced it, rather than make them and their children partakers of the richest blessings of his grace!

*Mr. N.* You are right, Charles; God would frown upon it, if it were such a "*pernicious heresy*." He frowns on other heresies, why then should he not on this?



## CHAPTER X.

Household baptism a privilege. What was a privilege to the Jews. Gospel not designed to abridge religious privileges, but to increase them. This ordinance coincides with the best feelings of believing parents.

*Mr. N.* As you wish to proceed with our conversation, I would say, we dedicate our children to God in baptism.

XIV. *Because it is a most precious privilege to us.*

What can be more precious than the thought, *God is a covenant God to me and mine.* It is a thought on which our souls love to dwell. O! how *near* it brings us to God! It binds our hearts to him by a thousand new and tender ties. When we look on our children, we see God's seal upon them. We feel that we ourselves have written on them, "holiness to the

Lord, and that they are his. And the moment we feel thus, all the tender ties which bind us to our dear children, become only so many cords to bind us to our children's God. And, my dear sons, if I have ever known what it is to pray; if my soul ever came near to God; if it ever went out to him in intense and holy desire; if it ever seized upon the promises of God with a grasp that could not be relaxed, or ever pleaded those promises with a holy importunity that could not be denied, it was when I have been praying for you, and, with all a father's love, pleading the promises of a *covenant* God in your behalf. Then, if ever, has faith been unshaken, and desire intense. I would not therefore, be debarred this privilege. It is dearer to me than thousands of silver. Yea, it is more precious than rubies.

*Ed.* But did believing Jews consider it a privilege to have the seal of the covenant applied to their children?

*Mr. N.* They did ; and no privilege was dearer to them.

*Charles.* And was the Gospel dispensation designed to take away, or to increase precious religious privileges ?

*Mr. N.* It was designed to increase them ; to shed more light upon man, and to open a wider door for sinners to enter the ark of safety. Since then, it was a precious privilege to the believing Jew, to have the seal of the covenant applied to his children, and since the Gospel is designed to increase the Christian's privileges, you see at once, that the very nature and design of the gospel, encourage our applying the new seal of the covenant to our children.

*Charles.* But what if it should be said, that the Gospel forbids our applying the seal of the covenant to our children ?

*Mr. N.* Then I would ask, where is such a prohibition to be found ? I have never yet found it, although I have searched the Bible very carefully.

*Charles.* But suppose you should be

compelled to admit that the Gospel does forbid our applying the seal of the covenant to our children, what then ?

*Mr. N.* Then, you would make it appear, that Christianity is less favorable to our children than Judaism, and that the new dispensation of the church, had taken away from pious parents, one precious privilege which the old dispensation granted them. But, it should be remembered, that the Gospel, was never designed to make our privileges less than those which the believing Jews enjoyed; It gives us "better" privileges and promises than they had. Hence, the very nature and design of the Gospel, seem to favor us with the privilege, of giving our children to God, and leaving them sealed for him.

*Ed.* But, for what reasons, besides those you have mentioned, does the pious parent consider household baptism a privilege?

*Mr. N.* He heartily wishes that his children may receive the blessing of God and be saved. He believes that means are to

be used, in order to save them; and he regards the act of dedicating them to God in baptism, as securing for them some of the most important means of salvation.

*Ed.* What means are secured for them by this act?

*Mr. N.* When he publicly gives them up to God in baptism, he does it where the prayers of many ascend with his own, to the Lord of heaven and earth, in behalf of his children; he publicly applies to them a sacred token or seal, which marks them for God, and which signifies that they are placed in the *school* of Christ, in the *nursery* of the church, where they are to enjoy faithful parental instruction, and the preaching of the Gospel; he applies to them a seal which is a public pledge that the church will *pray* for these children, and lend their aid in trying to save them; he applies to them a seal which signifies that they are to come under the influence of a divine economy fraught with the most gracious promises, and the most precious blessings.

Thus by the act of publicly dedicating his children to God in baptism, the parent is sacredly pledged to do what he can to save them, and the church is sacredly pledged to do what she can, by prayer, and example, and advice, to aid the parent in bringing up his children for God. The natural effect of such a pledge obviously is to secure for them greater parental faithfulness in educating them for God; the more earnest prayers of the whole church in their behalf, and powerful means of grace, which they otherwise would not enjoy. It brings them where God has promised to be a God to them, and places them in those blessed channels, where the streams of divine mercy usually flow?

*Charles.* Have you any more reasons to offer in favor of household baptism?

*Mr. N.* I have one more. We dedicate our children to God in baptism.

Finally. *Because it agrees with some of the best feelings of pious parents.*

*Charles.* When do parents have these feelings?

*Mr. N.* When they are enjoying happy and sweet communion with God. Observe them at such a time, and see how deep is their solicitude for the salvation of their children; ask them in what circumstances they would wish to place their children, and they will tell you, where Christians will be pledged to pray for them, and do what they can to secure their salvation; and where God will be most likely to fulfil his promise, and be a God to them forever.

Observe these same parents, when some adverse event of Providence is about to separate them from their children, ask them, where they wish to have their children left, during the trying separation; and they will tell you, where the children of God will be bound to pray for them, and watch over them, and where they can plead with the Lord to fulfil his promise, and be a God to them



*Charles.* Yes, I know their best feelings will prompt them to say this.

*Mr. N.* Then show these parents, that a public dedication of their children to God in baptism, will place them precisely where their best parental feelings would dictate. And you may then hear them exclaim, with the most delightful emotions,

“We bring them, Lord, in thankful hands,  
And yield them up to thee;  
Joyful that we ourselves are thine,  
Thine let our offspring be.

If orphans they are left behind,  
Thy guardian care we trust;  
That care shall heal our bleeding heart  
If weeping o’er their dust.”

Visit these same parents, when they come to the closing hour of life, and you may hear them thus pouring forth the deep feelings of their hearts, concerning their dear children: We have committed them to the care and prayers of the church; we have given them to God publicly, and this is just where we should wish to have them. We

have dedicated them to God in baptism; regarding this as a token, that God will be a covenant-keeping God to them; that the church will pray for them, and do what they can to train them up for the Lord; now we can leave them and die in peace.

I have thus stated to you some of the principal reasons in favor of the dedication of our children to God in baptism. They are reasons which fully satisfy my own mind on this subject, and cause me to feel that the observance of this rite is a most solemn *duty*, as well as a most sacred *privilege*.

*Charles.* They satisfy *me, perfectly*, father.

*Ed.* And me also. Whatever scruples or doubts, I may have had on this subject before, I confess they are all removed now.

## CHAPTER XI.

Six objections to Household Baptism answered.

*Ed.* Since our last conversation, I have been thinking of some of the *objections* which are frequently urged against the practice of household baptism; I should like to have you, father, notice some of them and tell us how you answer them.

*Mr. N.* I will do so cheerfully.

*Ed.* But stop a moment; I heard a distinguished opposer to household baptism say, a few days since, "that the practice of infant baptism was fast going out of repute, and would soon be done away entirely." What do you think of such a declaration?

*Mr. N.* I think it is not correct. Facts are against it. I have looked at the history of a large number of Churches in this vicinity, and find that on the whole, they are

not only careful to observe the practice of infant baptism, but are in some degree waking up to its importance, more than former generations did. I have also seen statements, within two years, in several publications which go to show that the attention of our churches to this important ordinance is *increasing* rather than *diminishing*!

*Ed.* Why then do the opposers of the ordinance, say, “that it is going out of practice?” Do they really think so? or do they say this, to encourage their own denomination, and mislead the more ignorant?

*Mr. N.* I never asked them why they made such statements; nor do I pretend to know what are their motives in doing it.

*Ed.* I see, father, that you are careful not to judge others, and suppose that you are thus guarding against being judged by them. Let us turn then to some of the objections which are urged against household baptism.

*Mr. N.* The first objection which I would notice, is this,—“*it is said, that in-*

*fants are not capable of entering into covenant with God."*

*Charles.* Did the Lord consider this as an objection, when he commanded Abraham to apply the seal of the covenant to his household?

*Mr. N.* He did not. He approved of parents including their children, or families, when they made a covenant with him. So Joshua understood the subject, when he said, "as for me and *my house* we will serve the Lord."—(Joshua 24, 15.) Indeed, the Lord himself made a covenant with Israel and their "*little ones.*" (Deut. 29, 11-13.) If God did this, in the Jewish dispensation, shall we not conclude, that he now approves of having it done, unless he has somewhere forbidden it?

*Ed.* Has he forbidden it?

*Mr. N.* No. He commanded, that it should be done in former times, and he has never since forbidden it.

*Charles.* On what ground then does the person stand, who opposes household bap-

tism, because infants themselves are not *capable* of entering into covenant with God?

*Mr. N.* On just such ground as he would have occupied, if he had objected to circumcising a child, when only eight days old, because it was not capable of entering into covenant with God. His objection goes against the *infant circumcision* which God formerly required, as much as it does against infant baptism. And since God approved of, and commanded infant circumcision, the objector stands in the attitude of directly opposing God's command.

*Edward.* What other objection would you mention?

*Mr. N.* It is said, that the Bible enjoins it upon a person to repent *before* he is baptized, and if he be baptized in infancy, this is impossible. But we have already seen that the Bible, in all these cases, refers to unbaptized adults, who were capable of repenting, and not to children.\* And we have

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\*See page 53.

seen too, Charles, in your conversation with Mr. A., that the Bible on his principle of interpretation requires a person to be born of water, i. e. *baptized, before* he is renewed by the Spirit, or *before* he repents.\* If we take his position, we shall make the Bible contradict itself. But suppose, you conclude, that, when the Bible says, “repent,” or “believe,” “and be baptized,” it refers to unbaptized adults,—and when it says, “Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit,” it refers to those who were baptized in infancy, will there be any contradiction then?

*Charles.* None at all. And this would be meeting the objection before us, by a plain declaration of scripture. It would certainly show that the Bible *does not require* that *all* should repent *before* they are baptized.

*Mr. N.* Since that objection appears to be groundless, I will pass on to another. It is said, “that infant baptism is an unmeaning

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\* Pages 59, 60, 61.



ceremony, because a little child cannot understand it."

*Charles.* How would you answer that objection?

*Mr. N.* By referring you to what we have already said, which shows us, that both to parents and the church, household baptism is an ordinance which is *full* of meaning; and I may add, that it is so in view of these baptized children themselves, when they have grown in years, and have been properly instructed respecting it.

*Ed.* Are there any more objections against infant baptism?

*Mr. N.* Yes. It is said, "that it does no good." But I think we have seen that it does *great* good. It makes parents more faithful, excites a deeper interest in the spiritual welfare of the rising generation, and in a great many ways tends to secure for them the blessing of God. Of course, this objection is altogether groundless.

*Charles.* And pray, father, what good does it do, *not to baptize them?*

*Ed.* I would ask also what good did it do to circumcise children? Why did not Abraham and other pious Jews say that circumcision could not do their children any good, and so refuse to circumcise them? I must confess this is a very weak objection.

*Mr. N.* I think so too, but there is another objection which I would mention. It is said, "*that there is no command for infant baptism in the Bible, and therefore it ought not to be practiced.*"

*Charles.* How do you answer this objection?

*Mr. N.* My answer is, God, in his covenant with Abraham, commanded him to apply the seal of the covenant, not only to adults, but to infants; this command was obeyed till Christ came; Christ commanded his disciples to apply a new seal, that is, baptism, to disciples, and he nowhere *forbids* their applying this new seal of the covenant to infants. He left this just where it was before he came. It had been enjoined by a positive command of God, to

apply the seal of the covenant to infants; and Christ did not annul that command. He did not say to his disciples, "*You must not apply the new seal of the covenant to the households of believers;*" and of course it is natural to conclude, that the new seal would be applied to infants, just as the old one had been.

*Charles.* You make it appear, then, that there is a command from God, in the Bible, enjoining it upon believing parents to have the seal of the covenant applied to their children?

*Mr. N.* Indeed I do. God commanded it, and that command must be binding still, unless the same authority has repealed it. But the Bible nowhere teaches us that this divine command has been repealed. It teaches us that Christ changed the seal of this covenant from circumcision to baptism; and that is all which it does teach on this point. God formerly commanded man to keep the Sabbath holy. Christ did not abrogate this command, but since Christ's

day, his people have observed the first day of the week as the Sabbath, instead of the seventh. There is no positive command in the New Testament for this change, or even for the holy observance of the Sabbath. Yet Christians observe the first day of the week as the Sabbath, because they feel that God's ancient command to keep the Sabbath holy is binding upon all in all ages, and because the example of Christ's apostles sustains it. It seems to me that the same thing is true in relation to applying the seal of the covenant to households. God commanded it in ancient times, and his command is still binding upon all his children, because it has never been abrogated. Christ only changed the seal, but did not say it was not to be applied to children as before.

*Charles.* If the application of the seal of the covenant to infants had once been commanded by the Lord, ought we to expect that Christ would *repeat* this command?

*Mr. N.* Certainly not. That would be

entirely unnecessary. As it had long been the practice to apply the same seal of the covenant to infants, which was applied to adults, this practice would certainly be continued after Christ came, even without any positive command from him.

*Charles.* What may we suppose Christ would have done, if he meant to have had this practice stop?

*Mr. N.* We may suppose that he would have plainly said so, and have expressly forbidden it. This he never did. In view of all these circumstances, therefore, we demand of the objector an express declaration of Christ, forbidding his disciples to apply the new seal of the covenant to infants; and till he can show us such a declaration, we have an unrepealed command of God, enjoining it upon us, to apply to our children the same seal of the covenant which we receive ourselves.

*Ed.* Have you any other objection to mention?

*Mr. N.* I know of only one more that is

worth noticing. It is said, "*that infant baptism deprives a person of the right of being baptized for himself.*"

*Ed.* How would you meet this?

*Mr. N.* I should say, that those who have been baptized in infancy, have the right, after they believe, of ratifying what their parents have done for them, that is, of receiving their baptism by faith, through the medium of their parents, just as believing Jews received the seal of the covenant in former times. Their parents applied it to them in their infancy; when they had grown to manhood, and believed, they assented to, or ratified what their parents had done. This was the way in which they received the seal of the covenant. The objection now before us, is, therefore, as much against infant circumcision, as it is against infant baptism. But if God commanded the former practice, why should man, on this ground, object to infant baptism, rather than to infant circumcision?

*Charles.* And may we not bring the



same objection, too, against a parent's giving deeds or bonds which bind his children to certain promises?

*Mr. N.* Yes; the parents, in these cases, act for their children, and bind them to certain courses. Now the objector might say, parents ought not to do this, because it prevents their children's acting for themselves. But still justice and civil law are satisfied with these arrangements, and no one objects to them? So in reference to the application of the seal of the covenant to children; since God has commanded it, and since he has never annulled that command, why should we not practice according to it? This objection is levelled *directly* against a parent's *binding* his children to any course whatever. He must not teach them any particular sentiment, he must not bind them by any deeds or bonds; and if an *Abraham*, he must not apply the seal of the covenant to his children, even though God has commanded it; for it would prevent their acting for themselves.



This objection, you see, is a sweeping one. It clashes with common sense, and law, and the command of God. It cannot, therefore, be valid.

*Charles.* Really, father, the objections against household baptism never appeared to me to be so weak and futile before.

*Mr. N.* People generally observe the first day of the week, as the Sabbath or Lord's day; and this is all right: but is there as much proof that the first day of the week should be thus observed, as there is, that believing parents should dedicate their children to God in baptism?

*Charles.* It seems to me there is not.

*Ed.* I have listened, father, with deep interest to all your reasons for household baptism; and to all your answers to the objections which are commonly urged against this ordinance, and am *perfectly satisfied* with them.

## CHAPTER XII.

Every member of the Church bound to do all he can to secure the salvation of baptized children. A general neglect of this duty. A good plan. Addresses.

*Ed.* From all that we have said on the subject of household baptism, I perceive that each church member has something to do in reference to the baptized children; will you show me, father, in what way, I, as a church member, am bound to make special efforts to secure their salvation?

*Mr. N.* When you united with the church, what did you pledge yourself to do?

*Ed.* I pledged myself to pray for all its members, to watch over them, and to try, in every way possible, to promote their spiritual welfare.

*Mr. N.* By this, you perceive that you

are pledged to promote the spiritual welfare of parents as well as that of others. Now the children of these parents are so intimately connected with them, that if they should become pious, it would greatly promote the spiritual welfare of their parents. Your pledge to the parents, therefore, is a virtual pledge to do what you can to bring about this blessed result.

*Ed.* Am I bound in any other way, to make special efforts for the salvation of the baptized children in our church?

*Mr. N.* Yes; by *assenting* to what these parents did, when they gave up their children to God in baptism, you pledged yourself to do what you could to *aid them*, in bringing up their children for God. Now you can pray for these children, you can plead with God to be their covenant-keeping God; you can treat them as though you were their friend, and felt deeply interested in their salvation; you can improve every opportunity for advising with their parents, so that by your counsel, they

may be aided in governing, and educating their children in such a way as will be most likely to secure their salvation. You are, therefore, pledged by your covenant with the church, and by assenting to what believing parents have done, to do all these things in behalf of the baptized children. In a word, you belong to this church, and the baptized children here, are by their baptism, so far connected with this church, as to demand your special prayers and efforts for their salvation.

*Ed.* I never thought of this as a duty, before this evening, and of course, I have always neglected it; but I now see that it is a duty, and I am determined it shall be neglected no longer. I will hereafter make the baptized children of our church, the subjects of special prayer, every day. Charles, will you join with me?

*Charles.* Yes. I too, must plead guilty of neglecting this duty, but I will neglect it no longer.

*Ed.* Do you suppose, father, that the

members of the church generally, are in the habit of doing their duty to the baptized children ?

*Mr. N.* I fear that they are not ; and that they do not all know or realize what is the extent of their duty to these children.

*Charles.* And what do you suppose is the consequence of this unfaithfulness ?

*Mr. N.* It is doubtless this : there are not so many of these baptized children converted in early life, as there probably would be, if their parents were faithful to them.

*Charles.* What would probably be the result if all parents and church members did perform to their children all the duties implied in infant baptism ?

*Mr. N.* If they knew, and performed all these duties faithfully, it is evident to my mind, that baptized children would generally become Christians while young ; and the world would thus see, that it was a blessed privilege for believing parents to have their households baptized.

*Ed.* The importance of having parents and the Church aroused to their duty to baptized children, is greatly magnified in my view. If Christians would all be *faithful* in this thing, I am confident they would do much, very much, to hasten on the day “when all shall know the Lord from the *least* unto the greatest.” And believing this, I am determined, besides offering special prayer, every day, for the baptized children, to improve every opportunity for conversing with the brethren and sisters of the church, on this subject; and thus see if we cannot all be excited to perform faithfully, these long neglected duties.

*Charles.* And I will do what I can to aid you. If our Churches would only awake to their duty in this matter, I think it would be the most direct way to silence every one who opposes household baptism. We could then say, even more emphatically than now, behold the fruits. “A bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit.”

*Ed.* Well, Charles, let us begin at once;



and as you are good at contriving, suppose you tell us what to do?

*Charles.* It is important to start right. You remember that our pastor, the other day, spoke of requesting the Church to meet once a month with all their baptized children, for the purpose of praying for them in their hearing, and urging them to repent. If such a meeting is established, I will visit every brother and sister of the Church, and urge them to attend and bring all the children who are large enough to attend meeting.

*Ed.* I like that much; what say you, father?

*Mr. N.* I am glad to see your readiness, my sons, to do good, and would say to you, go on in this good work, only be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," in all you do and say. I will do what I can to help you.

*Charles.* And if we should have a meeting of the Church and baptized children, would you, father, address them?



*Mr. N.* Yes, with all my heart.

*Charles.* And what would you say?

*Mr. N.* I would say, Christian brethren, we who have given our children up to God in baptism, are pledged to aid each other in bringing them up for God. We are pledged to offer special prayer for them, to plead mutually with our heavenly Father, that he will fulfil his promise, and be their God. We are pledged to do what we can to save these lambs of the flock; we took these pledges on us, when we brought them to the temple of the Lord, to receive the seal of the divine covenant; and now let us perform our duty. Henceforth let us improve every opportunity to urge it upon parents to fulfil their covenant vows. Let us see to it, that parents strive to bring up their children for the Lord. Let us improve every opportunity which God gives us, to induce every baptized child, or youth, to attend the Sabbath School, and all the means of grace which are afforded them. Let us encourage each parent, to

pray daily for the teachers of their children in the Sabbath School. Let us see to it, that our children are provided with pious teachers in our various schools. Let us often urge, these, our baptized children to repent, and give themselves to Christ, that they may be saved. We have publicly pledged ourselves to do all this; this pledge is recorded in heaven, we cannot go back from it; we must perform unto the Lord our vows; if we neglect it, if we neglect any of the duties implied in our solemn pledge, at the last great day, that pledge will rise up as a swift witness against us. But if we live up to our pledge, if we act according to all that is implied in it, God has promised to be a God to us, and to our children after us, and certainly he will fulfil all his promises?

*Ed.* How would you address pious fathers, on this subject?

*Mr. N.* I would say, Christian fathers, we are the constituted head of our families. It is our duty to see that our

children are trained up for God. "Of Abraham, God said, I know him, that he will command his household after him." He expects that we shall do the same; that we will so rule our own house, that our children shall be trained up in the way they should go. We have promised him we would do it. He will hold us to this promise. We must not think of throwing off this responsibility upon the mothers of our children. They have their responsibilities and duties in this case, and we have ours. Fathers are too prone to leave it with mothers to fulfil all which they are pledged to do in the consecration of their children to God. This will not do. We stand first in the household. Our responsibilities are the most prominent. Our children are to take our name, and transmit it to future generations; shall they not transmit some of our good influences and examples with it? It falls to us to take the lead in the blessed work of training up our children for God and heaven. While

mothers are forming their *maternal associations* to aid in bringing our children to God, ought we not to form *paternal associations*, for the same object? Then, while mothers were meeting with, and praying for, the little children in our families, fathers would be gathering the baptized *youth*, the older members of the same families, and in a united manner, bringing them before God for his blessing upon them. Could we not in this way exert a mighty and a salutary influence over that class of youth who begin to feel that they are too old to attend maternal meetings?

O remember, "when God maketh inquisition for the blood of souls, he will call *first* for the *father*." Let us, then, as fathers, faithfully perform unto the Lord our covenant vows over our dear children. Let us do what we can, to lead them to God. Let us see to it, that our daily domestic habits, our choice of occupation by which we maintain our children, our manner of discharging the duties of that occupation, our

choice of society to which we introduce our children, and our choice of schools in which we would have them educated,---O let us see to it, that *all* these be regulated by a supreme regard for their spiritual welfare. Let all our influence in our families be such as to lead our children to the formation of holy characters. Let all our conversation with them serve to instruct them, and point them to God. Let them be favored with the best of religious books, privileges, and influences, through life. Let our companions have all the means necessary to perform their part well in training up our children for heaven. As our offspring grow in years, let us follow them with a watchful eye, and a guiding and protecting hand. Above all, let us daily and hourly beseech the Lord to be their portion and refuge forever.

*Ed.* How would you address mothers, on this important subject?

*Mr. N.* I would say, Christian mothers, look at the little ones whom God has en-

trusted to your care; they are immortal. Instead of putting them into the hands of angels, God has given them to you, and commanded you to bring them up for him. In consecrating them to God in baptism, you have promised him, that you would be faithful to obey his command. Remember, "while you are fashioning their earliest smiles, or drying up their little tears, or singing over them the cradle hymn," they are watching your motions, and receiving impressions as lasting as eternity. In this way you are giving a direction to these immortal minds, you are preparing them towards heaven or hell, you are also forming their character for this world. While they transmit the *name* of your *companions* to coming generations, they will also transmit the *lineaments* of your *characters* to the same generations. Remember, it is yours, in a most important sense, to give the first direction to the thoughts and affections of these immortal beings. God has commanded you to take these



young spirits as they come into this stormy life, and direct them in the way to heaven, You have promised to do it. See that you fulfil this promise. To do it successfully, you must live near the throne of grace, you must dwell in the atmosphere of heaven, so that your very presence with your children will seem like that of an angel's. Trust in God to help you in your arduous work. When obstacles rise, when you begin to feel discouraged, go to the Lord, take hold of God's covenant, and plead its promises, till you rise above all hindrances. Teach your children daily how to please God. Set before them such an example, that you can always say, "be ye followers of me." Go to your closet with your children, one at a time, lay your hand upon their heads, and pray for them, and teach them to look up and say "Our Father which art in heaven." Take them to the maternal association, or to the social prayer meeting; bring them into the house of God, and thus endeavor to interest them in the



things of religion, that you may the more easily draw them, and bind them to that Saviour, who says, "suffer the little children to come unto me." O mothers, if you are unfaithful, how dreadful must be your doom? But if you are faithful, you shall at last, stand in glory with the mothers of Samuel, of John the Baptist, of Timothy, and of a host of others; you shall shine with them in heaven as mothers in Israel; and your children and the church will rise up and call you blessed forever.

*Ed.* What would you say to fathers and mothers together?

*Mr. N.* I would say, Christian parents, how momentous is the trust committed to us? It is the charge of immortal souls. We are to impart to them that knowledge which, by the blessing of God, shall make them wise unto salvation. We can never throw off this duty. We who have given our children to God in baptism, have publicly pledged ourselves to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,"

Remember God often blesses and saves children through the instrumentality of their parents. It is while they are pointing their little ones in the way to heaven, that God frequently pours out his Spirit upon their offspring. Parents, God says to us, "Take these children and nurse them for me." By giving them up to him in baptism, we have pledged ourselves to God, and each other, that we will do so; and now we cannot go back. Oh, then; look at these children; think of the seal of God, which has been placed upon them; think of their immortal souls; these immortal plants, it is ours to rear and cherish, to call down upon them, by our fervent prayers, the dews of heavenly grace, that they may flourish and bear fruit forever in the paradise of God.

Remember that our dear offspring must be renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, or they cannot see God. Remember our public pledge, to do all we can to secure their salvation. Oh, let us not forget

it. Let it be engraven deeply on our hearts. Let it excite us to bring our offspring, even in their infancy, and lay them down at Jesus' feet, and entreat him to put his hand upon them and bless them. Let it excite us to seek most earnestly for their *early conversion to God*. Let it excite us to teach our children the knowledge and fear of the Lord, when in the house, and when we walk by the way. Let it excite us to gather all our children, both old and young, and go with them into the Sabbath School, there to study God's word together. Let it excite us to aid them every day in gaining a more thorough knowledge of divine things. We can thus do much towards interesting our children in their lessons for the Sabbath School, and can every week impress some important truth upon their minds. Oh, let us begin this work in earnest.

Let this public pledge serve to awaken with us an intense, and unquenchable desire for the salvation of our children. Let

ceremony, because a little child cannot understand it."

*Charles.* How would you answer that objection?

*Mr. N.* By referring you to what we have already said, which shows us, that both to parents and the church, household baptism is an ordinance which is *full* of meaning; and I may add, that it is so in view of these baptized children themselves, when they have grown in years, and have been properly instructed respecting it.

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*Mr. N.* Yes; by *assenting* to what these parents did, when they gave up their children to God in baptism, you pledged yourself to do what you could to *aid them*, in bringing up their children for God. Now you can pray for these children, you can plead with God to be their covenant-keeping God; you can treat them as though you were their friend, and felt deeply interested in their salvation; you can improve every opportunity for advising with their parents, so that by your counsel, they



may be aided in governing, and educating their children in such a way as will be most likely to secure their salvation. You are, therefore, pledged by your covenant with the church, and by assenting to what believing parents have done, to do all these things in behalf of the baptized children. In a word, you belong to this church, and the baptized children here, are by their baptism, so far connected with this church, as to demand your special prayers and efforts for their salvation.

*Ed.* I never thought of this as a duty, before this evening, and of course, I have always neglected it; but I now see that it is a duty, and I am determined it shall be neglected no longer. I will hereafter make the baptized children of our church, the subjects of special prayer, every day. Charles, will you join with me?

*Charles.* Yes. I too, must plead guilty of neglecting this duty, but I will neglect it no longer.

*Ed.* Do you suppose, father, that the



members of the church generally, are in the habit of doing their duty to the baptized children?

*Mr. N.* I fear that they are not; and that they do not all know or realize what is the extent of their duty to these children.

*Charles.* And what do you suppose is the consequence of this unfaithfulness?

*Mr. N.* It is doubtless this: there are not so many of these baptized children converted in early life, as there probably would be, if their parents were faithful to them.

*Charles.* What would probably be the result if all parents and church members did perform to their children all the duties implied in infant baptism?

*Mr. N.* If they knew, and performed all these duties faithfully, it is evident to my mind, that baptized children would generally become Christians while young; and the world would thus see, that it was a blessed privilege for believing parents to have their households baptized.

of Abraham, is the same, with that on which it was founded in the time of Christ?

What changes in this covenant have been introduced?

Will you specify some of them?

What now takes the place of circumcision?

Do the ordinances in the Jewish and Christian dispensations point to the same truths?

What is the principal change or difference in these ordinances?

Which are the most convenient and significant, the former or latter?

Are the fundamental sentiments of the church, and the import of its ordinances the same in both dispensations?

Do many of the promises and predictions of the old dispensation, refer to the New?

How does Paul show that the church now is the same as the church in Abraham's day?

When you have grafted a fruit tree, is it the same tree as before?

Is it so with the church ?

Should we not then apply the seal of faith to believers, and their children, as it was done in former times ?

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#### CHAP. IV.

What is the next general reason in favor of household baptism ?

Did real believers apply the seal of the covenant to their households, till Christ came ?

What did Christ command his disciples to do ?

What is meant by all nations ?

What were Christ's disciples ?

Were they strongly attached to Jewish principles ?

When a Gentile parent embraced the religion of the Jews, was the seal of the covenant applied to him and his household ?

Was this practice dear to the Jews ?

What were Christ's disciples to do, when a Gentile embraced the Gospel? *Ans.* Baptize him.

What were they to do with his children?

Why should you think they would baptize them?

Why would not the Jews of their own accord cease to apply the seal of the covenant to their households?

What had God commanded his people to do with such children? *Ans.* Apply to them the seal of the covenant.

Are we to suppose that this command was to be obeyed, till another one should annul it?

What then would Christ's disciples be likely to do with the children of a believing Gentile? *Ans.* Apply to them the new seal of the covenant.

In doing this, would they be obeying the command of God?

Why not suppose that the disciples would withhold baptism from such children? *Ans.* Because God had commanded the

Jews to apply the seal of the covenant to such children,—and this was a practice very dear to them.

What would have been necessary if Christ had intended that his disciples should refuse to apply the new seal to the households of believers? *Ans.* A plain command forbidding it.

Did Christ any where give them such a command? *Ans.* No.

Had he given such a command, could he then be called a “mediator of a better covenant,” especially as it regarded the children of believers?

Had he shut out the children of believers from receiving the new seal of the covenant, would he not have abridged the privileges of the Jews?

How has Christ left this subject? *Ans.* He is silent about it. He seems to have left his people to go on as formerly on this point.

Would he probably have been silent about it, if he meant to have them discon-

tinue the practice of applying the seal to their children?

Is it proper to say now, that such children are not to be baptized, because Christ has not commanded it? *Ans.* No.

Why? *Ans.* Because God had commanded his people to apply the seal of faith to their children, and Christ nowhere annulled that command; of course, the command of God on this subject, must still be in force.

Before we give up this practice then, must we have a command from Christ requiring us to cease from it?

How is the Sabbath left in regard to its observance being commanded? *Ans.* God, in ancient times commanded that it should be observed, Christ did not repeat this command. He left it where it was before, only changed the day, and this not by any recorded command.

Is the command of God then, to believers, to apply the seal of faith to their children still in force?



Why? *Ans.* Because it has never been annulled.

What is the sixth general reason in favor of household baptism?

Where did Christ encourage any thing like it?

Did he baptize these children?

What did he do?

What truth did he here teach? *Ans.* that it pleased him to have parents dedicate their children to him in a public manner.

Why did not Christ baptize these children?

Had they probably been circumcised?

But may not Christian parents consecrate their children to the Lord in their closets?

What more would Christ have them do?

What did Christ's disciples do when these parents were bringing their children to Christ? *Ans.* Forbade them.

Do not those Christians who oppose



household baptism act somewhat as Christ's disciples did, in this instance?

What reason did Christ offer, when he said, "suffer little children," &c.

What did he mean to teach, when he uttered this declaration? *Ans.* That the children of believers held the same relation to the church in the new dispensation that they did in the old.

Would Jews understand it in this light?

Ought we thus to understand it?

When parents consecrate their children to God in baptism, do they seem to comply with what Christ here encourages?

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#### C H A P . V .

What is the seventh general reason in favor of household baptism?

Is there nothing in the Bible against it?

Do not the opposers to this practice find something in the Bible against it?

What passages do they refer to?

Have these any thing to do with little infants?

If you apply them to infants, what will be the consequence?

By what principle of interpretation do some explain these passages so as to prohibit household baptism?

Do not these passages teach that adults are to be baptized after they have believed?

*Ans.* Yes, if they never have been baptized.

If a person be baptized in infancy, and afterwards becomes a Christian, is he a baptized believer? *Ans.* Yes; just as much so as Isaac or Jacob were circumcised believers after they had become Christians.

What is said of a man who thinks he has become a Christian, is baptized and unites with the Church, but after this finds he is deceived, and is then really converted?

Was he not baptized before he became a real believer?

Is he not then after his real conversion, a baptized believer ?

Will you repeat what is said at the closing part of the seventh reason, concerning the children who were baptized, and after this became believers, and wished to unite with the church ?

Could any one show that they had not been baptized ?

Could any one show that they had not complied with the directions of the Bible on that subject ?

Do these passages prove any thing against household baptism ?

What is the eighth general reason in favor of this practice ?

What passages are here referred to ?

To what does the passage refer, beginning thus, "Else were your children unclean" ?

What did Edward say neighbor A— once told him about this passage ?

Does neighbor A—'s view of this passage make it appear ridiculous ?

Does Mr. N.'s view of it appear rational?

Does the Bible then give us a warrant in favor of household baptism?

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#### CHAP. VI.

What is the ninth general reason in favor of infant baptism?

What is meant by the word households?

Is the Bible accustomed to speak of families in a way that connects the children with their parents?

When a Gentile parent believed, did the Jews, on account of *his* faith, apply the seal of the covenant to all the males in his family?

What instance can you mention, where the Apostles applied the new seal of the covenant to the whole household, on account of the faith of the head of such a family?

What does this instance show us? *Ans.* It shows that the *only* reason why Lydia

and her family were baptized, was because *she* believed.

If all her family had become believers, would not the Apostle have mentioned such an interesting fact?

What reason did Mr. A. give for supposing that all Lydia's household were believers?

How did Charles answer this?

Is there any reason to suppose that "Brethren" here refers to the members of Lydia's household?

From the manner in which Lydia's case is here described, does it seem that the apostle *meant* to convey the idea, that all *her* household were baptized because *she* believed?

Would a Jew so understand this description?

What other case does the Bible mention, respecting household baptism?

Did all in the Jailor's house believe?

What does the word rendered, "with all his house," mean in the original?

What part of speech is it ?

What does it qualify ?

What then is the literal rendering of this passage ?

What is obvious from this case ?

What other household does the Bible say was baptized ?

Could the Apostle have used plainer terms, if he meant to inform us that he baptized whole households on account of their parents' faith ?

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#### CHAP. VII.

What is given as the tenth reason for household baptism ?

What proves this ?

Who were called the Fathers ?

How long did the Apostle John live ?

When did Justin Martyr live ?

What does he say about household baptism ?

What does he mean by this ?

What else does he say on this subject ?

What other early writer speaks upon this subject ?

When did he live ?

What does he say ?

How does he use the word “regenerated ?”

When did he write this ?

What other writer speaks of this subject ?

When did he live ?

Was he capable of knowing what the usage of the Church was ?

What did he say ?

What do these declarations show ?

What do the testimonies of these writers establish ?

When did the council of sixty-six bishops meet at Carthage ?

What question did they discuss ?

How was it decided ?

Was there any thing said in this council against household baptism ?

Could they have easily ascertained what was the Apostle's practice ?



How do they speak of household baptism? *Ans.* As if it was in universal practice at that time.

What other writer can you mention?

When did he live?

What has he said?

Was Pelagius a great traveler and a great scholar?

When did he live? What has he said on this subject?

What do these witnesses assure us?

In what century did Tertullian live?

What notions did he adopt about baptism?

Did he plead scripture, or history to favor his notions?

Did he virtually admit that household baptism was commonly practiced?

Does his testimony weigh any more against the baptism of households, than it does against that of other individuals?

Was his influence very limited?

Can historical proof be brought to show that household baptism was generally prac-

ticed many centuries after the first four?

What does a celebrated writer say of the next seven hundred years?

Who opposed household baptism in 1120?

Why?

Did the Waldenses generally join this sect?

Did this sect of opposers continue long?

What did the Waldenses do as a body?

What was their mode of baptism?

About what time did opposition next arise against household baptism?

What were these opposers called as a sect?

Were they the first body of people who opposed household baptism, on the principles now adopted by the Baptists?

What does history then prove in reference to this subject?

How do the opposers of household baptism meet this historical evidence in favor of it?

Could they tell whether an infant, eight days old was a believer or not?

What other way do they evade this historical evidence on this subject?

Can they tell what was practiced during the first and second centuries, so well as Justin Martyr and others?

Do they show that there was any discussion or controversy about the introduction of household baptism, in some of the early centuries after Christ?

Can they show this?

How could such a practice as household baptism become general without any opposition in 150 years after the Apostles, unless they had in some way sanctioned it?

Were Christians then on their guard against heresy?

Would they have risen against household baptism, if it had been introduced by uninspired men?

Is there any account of a controversy on the subject of introducing household baptism during the first two centuries?

If there had been, would Augustine have heard of it?

Do the early Fathers speak of household baptism, as if they had any doubts about the propriety of practicing it?

What are some of the conclusions we may form from the evidence of history on this subject?

Is much importance to be attached to this historical evidence?

What does historical evidence prove on other subjects?

Why should it not be admitted in reference to household baptism?

Sweep away all historical evidence, and what will be the consequences?

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#### CHAP. VIII.

What is the eleventh general reason in favor of household baptism?

What is meant by this?

In what has God connected children with heir parents in this world?

Has he done this, when he made covenants with his people?

In what do parents act for their children?

Are the deeds or bonds given by parents, binding upon their children?

What inference is to be drawn from this common practice?

Did God command parents to act thus for their children in former times, in the externals of religion?

Why?

Does the same relation still exist between parents and their children?

What then is the plain duty of parents now on this subject?

What is the twelfth general reason in favor of household baptism?

How does it tend to make parents more faithful?

Will a pledge serve to make them more faithful?

What are some of the circumstances in which this pledge is made?

Is there any thing in this ordinance, be-

sides this pledge to render parents more faithful?

What are the minister and church pledged to do by this ordinance?

Will all this serve to make the parents more faithful?

How does household baptism tend to excite in the surrounding community, a deeper interest in the spiritual welfare of the rising generation? *Ans.* It leads them to conclude that such children are to be trained up for God.

Does it serve to cherish this impression in the minds of the world?

What is the proof here given of this?

Is this all that this ordinance does?

Whom does it *provoke* to good works?

In what way?

What do they mean by appeals of this kind?

Can you mention any writer, who does this?

For what was this circular prepared?

What passage will you mention in this circular?

What was the writer's object in this sentence?

Did he urge them to imitate us?

What then?

Do you think that our practice serves to provoke the Baptists to greater zeal and faithfulness, in training up their children for God?

Will you explain some of the ways, in which our practice has produced these effects upon the Baptists?

Who can tell how great are the effects thus produced?

What is often the effect of infant baptism upon the child?

What did an intelligent young man once say upon this subject?

What are some of the effects of this practice upon parents?

What are some of its effects upon ministers, and churches?



What is said about a Lawyer, at a prayer meeting?

What are some of the means which this practice has excited parents and churches to use, for the conversion of children?

Have other denominations been excited to use similar means?

What will show how much good infant baptism has done?

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#### CHAP. IX.

What is the thirteenth general reason on this subject?

Did God bless children for the parents' sake, under the Jewish dispensation?

What instances can you mention?

If infant baptism be an error or heresy, what ought we to expect God would do to those who practice it?

What has he generally done, where churches have turned aside to error?

Does he bless those who practice household baptism?

What facts show that he blesses it to spectators?

In what other ways does God bless this ordinance? *Ans.* In the dispensations of his grace to the baptized children?

What facts prove this?

What did the young man educated a Baptist, say?

What effect did it have upon him?

Do these facts prove what you intend they should?

Did not these children enjoy better instruction than others?

Why did they enjoy it?

Was their baptism, in part at least, the cause of it?

In what other way, does it appear that God has blessed this ordinance, in the dispensations of his grace?

How would you make this comparison?

Who made such a comparison?

State what he says about the churches which he compared with each other.

How many families did he take, whose parents were pious ?

How old were the children which he included in his comparison ?

What was the result ?

If we should go through the land with such a comparison, what should we find ?

What would be the case if our churches were more faithful in performing the duties implied in infant baptism ?

If it were a pernicious heresy, what should we expect to find ?

What do we find in regard to those who practice it ?

Does God bless them ?

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## CHAP. X.

What is the fourteenth reason in favor of infant baptism ?

Did the believing Jews consider it a priv-

ilege to have the seal of faith applied to their children?

What was the Gospel dispensation designed to do?

What may we learn from this fact?

What if it should be said, that the Gospel forbids our applying the seal of the covenant to our children?

Is there any such prohibition?

If there were, would it be abridging previous privileges?

Why do pious parents consider infant baptism a privilege?

What means of grace are secured to them by this act?

Will you state them?

What is the last general reason in favor of household baptism?

When do pious parents have these feelings?

When they have these feelings, where do they wish to place their children?

Where do they wish to leave their chil-

dren, when they are to be separated from them in this world ?

Where do they wish to leave them when they die ?

Does household baptism leave them in these places ?

Who was satisfied with these reasons in favor of infant baptism ?

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#### CHAP. XI.

Is infant baptism fast going out of repute ?

Who says it is ?

Is this true ?

Are there any objections to household baptism ?

What is the first ?

Did the Lord consider this as an objection formerly ?

Did he command the seal of the covenant to be applied to children ?

Has he any where forbidden it ?

Where then does the objection in this case stand? *Ans.* Opposed to God.

What is the second objection here mentioned?

How would you meet this objection?

To whom does the Bible in these passages refer?

Do those who address these passages, as objections to infant baptism, adopt a false principle of interpretation?

What is it?

What would it lead to?

Will there be any contradiction in these passages if you suppose they refer to the baptism of adults, and of infants?

How would this be meeting the objection?

What is the third objection here mentioned?

Is it true? Is infant baptism a ceremony full of meaning? To whom?

What is the fourth objection?

Have we seen that it does great good?

What good does it do, not to baptize them?

What is the fifth objection?

Ought we to expect a new command in favor of it. *Ans.* No.

Why not? *Ans.* Because God commanded what was similar to it in ancient times:—what God commanded was observed till Christ came, and he only changed the seal of the covenant.

How has Christ left this subject?

Has he left it so, that we should practice infant baptism, unless we can find a command against it?

Is God's command to apply the seal of the covenant to the children of believers, still binding?

If Christ did not mean to have it practiced, should we have reason to expect he would have forbidden its being practiced?

Was it necessary for Christ to repeat the command if he meant to have the seal of the covenant applied to the children of believers?



Then, instead of looking for a command *for* infant baptism, ought we not to look for one *against* it, or else practice it? *Ans.* Yes.

What is the sixth objection?

How would you meet this?

Have they the right of ratifying what their parents have done?

How did the circumcised children among the Jews do?

Is this objection as much against infant circumcision as infant baptism?

May we not bring this objection against a parent's giving a deed, or doing any thing to bind his children?

What is this objection levelled against?

Is it a sweeping one?

What does it clash with?

On the whole, are the objections to household baptism weak, or strong?

Are the reasons for it, strong?

What day of the week is generally observed as the Sabbath?

Is there more evidence in favor of thus

observing the first day of the week, than of the duty to baptize our children ?

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## CHAP. XII.

Is every member of the church bound to make special efforts to save the baptized children ?

Will you show how he is thus bound ?

What is each one to do for these children ?

Are these duties to the baptized children generally neglected by the churches ?

What is the consequence of this neglect ?

What would probably be the result, if all church members should perform these duties faithfully ?

Is it important they should wake to these duties ?

Should each church member offer special prayer for the baptized children every day ?

What else should they do ? *Ans.* Converse with each other on the subject.

What plan did the pastor suggest to rouse the church ?

For what purpose would he establish such a meeting ?

Did Mr. N. think this plan a judicious one ?

Do you think it would be a good plan for all congregational churches ?

Whom does Mr. N. first address on this subject ?

Will you read his address to church members ?

What do you think of it ?

Whom did he address next ?

Will you read this address ?

Would it be something new to have Paternal Associations ?

What do you think of this address ?

Whom does he next address ?

Will you read this address to mothers ?

What do you think of it ?

Whom does he next address ?

Will you read this address to Christian fathers and mothers ?

Will you do what you can to persuade them to follow these directions ?

Whom did Mr. N. address last ?

Will you read this address to baptized children ?

How do you like it ?

Would such a course, as is pointed out in these addresses, if faithfully followed, serve to hasten on the latter day glory ?

What then would you say to parents and professors of religion ? *Ans.* Arise and do all your duty to baptized children.

And what would you say to such children ? *Ans.* Let us all now repent of sin, and give ourselves entirely to the Lord. Let us *do it* to-day, while it is an accepted time.





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